

History of English Language in Sudan

A Critical Re-reading

Dr. Abdel Rahman M. Yeddi Elnoor

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Sudan**
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“O my Lord! For that with which You have bestowed Your Grace on me, never shall I be a supporter of Mujrimeen (criminals, polytheists, sinners, hypocrites, imperialists, colonialists, etc)!”[28:17]

Dedicated to
All Forces of 'Ta`seel'
(Forces that Islamize all Aspects of Life)

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In the name of the Almighty Allah, and PBU the Prophet Mohammed and his pure
Progeny

Acknowledgment

Allah's will (be done)! There is no power
But with Allah, the Almighty, Praise be to Allah, the
Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds, and PBU the
Prophet Mohammed and his progeny.

Dear reader, the history of ELT in Sudan needs a
bold critical evaluation. A criminal conspiracy has
mutilated the history of Sudan in general and that of ELT
in Sudan in particular. The post-colonial intelligentsia did
not try to make any objective reading or writing of
different aspects of the history of our nation in order to
remove the cunning concepts injected into it. No attempt
was made to re-enroot our original history and create
enlightened Sudanese generations that are aware of the
value of unity in diversity.

As far as the history of ELT in Sudan is concerned,
it is mostly viewed within a foreign perspective either by
many Sudanese intelligentsia or by foreign historians of
language teaching. In other words, most of the available
arguments mislead the reader, distort facts and prevent
him from having proper perception of the pernicious
effect of the colonial language policy in Sudan. This alien
perspective misleads the sensuous reader, neutralizes the
ideological vision of learners and leads to the

development of a naïve and uncritical faculty. We can assume that the available literature on the history of ELT, notoriously, clothes the ELT program, during the period of colonialism, with educational and civilizing ends. It also maliciously aggravates the cultural chasm between the North and the South of Sudan. It means that the available literature is cunningly written by Europeans or naively and uncritically copied by some Sudanese to suggest that the segregation between the North and the South is once and for all. It is this imperialistic and colonial tendency and its ramifications that the present book attempts to expose by depicting, critically, the history, aims and changing status of ELT in Sudan. I feel that the Sudanese teachers, researchers, and learners are in need of a material that re-reads and re-studies, critically and objectively, the history of ELT in Sudan, corrects the existing misconceptions and offers a strong ideological background upon which to lean.

In other words, the present work attempts to re-read the history of ELT in Sudan, its aims, status and future prospect and re-form a realistic vision about it. It evaluates the colonial, post-colonial and current language policy. It is an attempt to expose the malicious colonial ELT project which was ingrained in the colonial education that aimed at keeping the southerners morally and culturally backward and displacing the northerners from their glorious culture. It deals, critically, with the aims and objectives of ELT at various stages of its history. It also

examines the shifting situations and status of ELT and offers a prospect of future-need of the Sudanese for the English language course and the feasibility of implementing it. In fact, my sole aim is to create an ideolinguistic vision for molding the English language program in Sudan and employing it to serve the Sudanese society and its Islamic orientation.

First of all, I pray to Allah; the Almighty, to make this work capable of developing Islamic vision in the reader of the history of ELT in Sudan and creating a proper perception about the aims of its teaching at present and in future.

I'm indebted to the innumerable material, documented or otherwise, which have been of valuable help to me in re-reading and re-shaping the history of English in Sudan. Acknowledgement is made in the book, wherever necessary and possible, of materials which have been quoted or cited.

This endeavour would have met with a premature end without the unending support I found at different stages of my educational and intellectual journey. I express my deep sense of gratitude to the members of my family. I would like to express my appreciation for their support. I am, particularly, thankful to my mother, brothers; particularly Abdullateef, and sisters whose varied types of generous, untiring and unfailing moral support enabled me to transcend the difficulties and create many fronts of intellectual breakthrough. I will remain also, always,

indebted to my Indian brother and sister in Islam, Mr. Mohammed Mazharuddeen and his wife Dr. Tayyaba Sultana who were always generous to me whenever I landed on their wonderful land.

I am extremely grateful to Dr. Satish B. Deshpande, Department of English, Dr. BAM University, Aurangabad, India, who supervised me in the writing of the Ph.D. thesis which inspired this book. His professional guidance and friendly encouragement during my Ph.D. journey in India have been invaluable and contributed to establishing a practical ideological vision in me. Generously, he read the final draft of this book and wrote the preface.

I am immensely grateful to Dr. Dani, the Head of Dept. of English in Fergusson College, Pune, India, who discovered my innate scientific and intellectual potentiality, during my M. A. course of English literature, 1991-1993, and encouraged me to venture into the journey for achieving Ph. D. in English. I'm indebted also to Prof. Muzaffar Saleem, Vice Principal, Poona College, whose high vision about me pumped an overwhelming confidence in my soul and pushed me ahead in the journey of acquiring knowledge. I'm grateful to Mr. Sayed Waheeduddeen Quadri (Aurangabad) for providing me with software facilities. I'm thankful to the publication house and its staff for taking care of my intellectual achievements and giving them a due attention. May Allah add it to the deposit of their good deeds.

Finally, "My Lord! Grant me the power and ability

that I may be grateful for Your favour which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and that I may do righteous good deeds that will please You, and make my offspring good Truly, I am one of the Muslims (submitting to Your will).”[46:15]

Dr. Abdelrahman Mohammed Yeddi Elnoor, 2003

Preface

Although the spread of English all over the world is a direct consequence of the process of colonization, the world has for a long time felt a need to develop a post-colonial perspective on English language teaching. The teaching of English in the non-English speaking countries during the Nineteenth and the Twentieth Century was an outcome of diabolic designs of the imperialistic forces to corrupt the native cultural streams of their colonies. It may also be noted that the Britishers invariably followed a policy of divide and rule all over the world. Dr. Yeddi has clearly pointed out the British designs in the policy of teaching English on the basis of a North-South divide in Sudan.

It is clear that the erstwhile colonies have a dual attitude towards English language. On the one hand English language is undesirable because it goes against the patriotic feelings. On the other hand, the English language has also been found to be desirable for various reasons. It is, therefore, very important to re-read the history of its teaching and re-define the objective in countries like Sudan as Dr. Yeddi has rightly pointed out. It is also very important to note that the colonizing function of the English language is not necessarily over even after the departure of the colonizer. The colonizer still appears to be cherishing a feeling that teaching English all over the world is a colonial legacy that he rightfully inherits. This is reflected in the mushroom growth

of the theories of second language learning and also that of ELT experts in the imperialistic countries. It is time that the imperialist nations are told that the methodology of teaching English need not be their monopoly. It is important for every country to undertake an objective needs assessment vis-a-vis English and develop a methodology of teaching English accordingly. Although one may not totally agree with the views expressed in the book regarding the Communicative Approach, it should be noted that the erstwhile colonies have enough potential to develop their own syllabus and design a methodology of teaching it. If this is done, half of the imperialistic designs of cultural aggression can be neutralized. Dr. Yeddi's book would go a long way in developing this perspective. Dr. Yeddi deals also with other problems facing ELT in Sudan. Although no solution appears to be in sight, it seems to be a significant step in the right direction.

The book is written in a peculiar style. Dr. Yeddi uses English with a great deal of felicity with a creative sprinkling of non-native expressions and phrases. This would certainly help develop a new version of English and thereby enrich the language of the colonizers which probably was not an objective of teaching English on their part. I'm very happy that Dr. Yeddi is using his talent creatively. He is a young and upcoming scholar. Apart from obtaining his Ph.D. on, "A Critical Study of English Language Teaching in Sudan", he has already published three books and is also on the way of publishing one more book on ELT in addition to this one. I

think that it is a significant achievement for a scholar of his age. I wish him success and happiness.

Dr. Satish Deshpande, *Department of English,*
Dr. B.A.M. University, Aurangabd, 12 June, 2003.

Introduction

A Targeted Nation:

Throughout history, Islam is a targeted religion and Muslims are a targeted nation. Why? Because since Adam, PBUH, had descended from the Heaven, Satan, obstinately, undertook cunning motives and exerted all evil efforts to corrupt the pure and intuitive nature of worshippers. Allah, the Almighty, tells us this fact in Quran. He, the Almighty, says, “Allah did curse him, But he (Satan) said: ‘I will take of Thy servants a portion marked off; I will mislead them, and I will create in them false desires; I will order them to slit the ears of cattle, and to deface the fair nature created by Allah.’”[4:118] Satan qualified some stray people to undertake the same plots. Quran reveals for us the malicious plots of the enemies of Islam since the depth of history. Describing the evil motives of the enemies of Islam, to displace and uproot Muslims, Quran states, “They but wish that ye should reject Faith, as they do, and thus be on the same footing (as they).”[4:89] In another verse it says, “And they desire that ye should reject the Truth.”[60:2] It was that kind of Satanic design which characterized the colonial presence in Sudan. Colonialism has tried to corrupt the clear stream of the Sudanese culture and put the foundation for dividing a

nation whose unity goes deep into the history.

Colonialism and the Language Map of Sudan:

Colonialism exploited the linguistic diversity not only of Sudan, but also of the whole African continent so as to administer its own linguistic and conceptual poisons upon the natives of Africa. Unfortunately, many African countries, knowingly or unknowingly, swallowed the colonial poison and turned themselves into linguistic and ideological extensions of the colonizer. Nevertheless, they failed to achieve any cultural or social upgrading as they wished. They have rather lost their cultural and linguistic identity and turned themselves into dwarfs. What did English or French do to many Africans who discarded their own mother tongues and stretched, with an air of snobbery, their lips in order to speak English and French? Africans failed to realize that Europe which claims to be civilized, is still continuing to impose its uncivilized racial and exploiting behaviour upon the Africans through its cultural tools; its languages. In the past, Europe stole the natural resources of the African continent and even after the so-called independence it continued to do so through its local agents. Africans learned European languages as they thought that they are the gates for better life. However, they came to realize that they did not learn a European language, but a cultural usurper only. Consequently, Africans headed to Europe in search for jobs, but the latter

is, miserly, blocking the ways before the African migrants who are not heading to Europe in order to colonize it as Tayeb Salih had artistically claimed in his novel 'Season of Migration to the North', but they are going to Europe as searchers for employment only. In other words, many Africans who are fluent speakers of European languages such as English, French, Italian, etc could not find jobs in their own countries in spite of their mastery of a language which they wasted their effort, identity and life to learn it, unfortunately, it rendered them useless in their own countries and when they try to migrate to Europe in search for jobs, they are not welcomed there. It seems that Africans have, knowingly or unknowingly, undergone a historical and unprecedented deception. Unfortunately, the Africans are still swallowing, and getting subjected to, the same poisoned and radiated doses in their modern compositions.

As far as the Sudan is concerned, colonialism tried to do the same thing with the Sudanese linguistic identity. Cromer, J. Curry and Kitchener, the colonial rulers; the axis of evil, poked their pink noses in our affairs in order to metamorphose the cultural and linguistic identity of the Sudan. They undertook sinister efforts to deprive the Sudanese from their valuable treasure; Arabic language. They implemented their own linguistic plans by ways of exploiting the linguistic diversity of Sudan and hindering the spread of Arabic all over the country.

The colonial motive was not only economic, but it

was also ideological, cultural and linguistic as well. The cultural, economic, social and linguistic problems from which we suffer now, are the natural result of the Satanic plots and conspiracies of colonialism; old and modern. Colonialism did not only lay down the policy of imposing English, but also the foundation for the mutilation of the Sudanese mind, language and culture by ways of exploiting the linguistic peculiarity of Sudan.

It is a well-known fact that Sudan, throughout its recorded history, was a multi-linguistic society. A situation of bilingualism was the major feature of the Sudanese linguistic map. This was basically because Sudan is a large country and a great mixture of many races. Nevertheless, during the last century Arabic became the language of the vast majority of the Sudanese irrespective of their racial, tribal and religious backgrounds. Arabic had always been the major language present in the life of almost all the Sudanese though it might have accompanied other local vernaculars many of which were also existing in Sudan. It has rapidly taken the place of other vernaculars and turned to be the most preferable tool for educational and intellectual excellence. Even the non-Muslim minorities are finding it socially and morally convenient to communicate in Arabic, adopt it as the first language and survive within the harmonious nature of its culture. It is now the mother-tongue of almost all the Sudanese and the official language of Sudan. The minor linguistic disparities are bound to

disappear by the passing of time. It means that the national and religious awareness of the Sudanese had always aborted the vicious designs of old and modern colonialism.

Ever since Arabic has become the mother-tongue of the majority of the Sudanese, it made the process of educating the successive generations easier. In the past, it was difficult to enhance the educational efforts, particularly, in an area like the southern part of Sudan (now called the State of Southern Sudan). This was, basically, due to the extreme linguistic diversity of the South in contrast to the linguistic situation of the North. The homogenous linguistic map of the North helped the colonial forces to plan and implement the educational program easily. However, as far as the South was concerned, it was educationally and financially impossible to plan and enforce the educational effort due to its heterogeneous linguistic setting.

The ELT position in Sudan had already been affected by the drastic and dramatic changes after the departure of the colonial army. Those who are in charge of laying down the policy of ELT in Sudan could not deal with the changing status of English. Therefore, one observes the 'ad hoc' plans and implementations that failed to serve the actual purposes. It seems that those plans conceived an imaginable vision and therefore they begot futility only. One feels that, like many aspects of education, the program of ELT also needs an insight that

may rescue it from the chasm it has plunged into.

It is, therefore, important to understand, properly, the history and aims of ELT in Sudan in order to formulate an objective language policy. Developing a harmonious and uniform language policy is imperative for social, cultural and linguistic cohesion of the Sudanese society. A proper understanding of the history of ELT is essential for engineering a wise and uniform language policy conducive to the growing cultural and linguistic homogeneity of the Sudanese and improving the standard of the English language. Acquiring a clear background of the history of the English language and the colonial policies related to it will enable the planners of language policy in Sudan to deal, more consciously, with the issue of teaching foreign languages. It will help them to avoid bias and obliquity in the process of evolving a suitable ELT policy and devise a course that would have a purposeful aim. It will also benefit not only the Sudanese, but it may also help many African countries to reshape their attitude towards foreign cultures and embrace the way of life that would restore their lost identity and dignity and give purpose to their life.

Finally, a deep study of the history, aims and policies of ELT in Sudan, may enable us not only to build a proper concept of its teaching/learning in Sudan at present, but also to understand the native speakers and devise a course that serves higher ideological and national aims. The Prophet Mohammed (PBUH and his

progeny) says, “Whoever learns a language of another nation (foreign to him), can guard himself against their evil.”

History of ELT in Sudan

Introduction:

It is well known that colonialism has various shapes and different weapons such as ideological, economic, political, educational, linguistic, etc. It uses these weapons, including education and language, and fights on various fronts to annihilate the identity of the subject. This is evident from the imperialist position of the English language in Sudanese education since the early years of the 20th century. The following evaluation of the history of the English language teaching in Sudan will confirm the above statement.

History and Standard of English from 1898 to 1956:

English came to Sudan with the colonial army in 1898. This date marks the beginning of the British colonialism that introduced Western-type education based on the hegemony of the English language. It aimed at, both, transforming the Sudanese culturally and exploiting them economically. It was introduced through two types of education. The first type was government education. In this type of education, the colonial rule started teaching the English language to some of the northern Sudanese children so as to, as they usually claim, appoint them on subordinate posts in the

colonial administration erected in Sudan. The other type of education in which the English language ruled and reigned was the Christian missionary schools in the South. The European missionary societies embarked upon a fevered campaign of converting the pagans of the South of Sudan from paganism to Crossificationism. Therefore, the English language reigned in two systems of Western education established in the North and the South of Sudan and in both the types it played mingled roles.

English in the North of Sudan:

The English language was introduced at various levels of education in the North. Colonialism erected a College in 1902 and named it after the perishable Gordon. Its wily wish was to make the Sudanese commemorate the name of an invader whom they had annihilated by their own hands during the Islamic revolution of El Mujahid Mohammed Ahmed El-Mahadi. It also established many Elementary and Primary schools in various parts of northern Sudan to achieve colonial ulterior motives. Since then, Sudan entered into the era of the sinister hegemony of the English language.

To achieve their ulterior linguistic cultural aims, the colonial rulers waged a war against the Arabic language, and to enhance the colonial cultural supremacy, the educational officials were keen on uplifting the standard of the English language in education. They resorted to the use of Arabic, only, at the lower stages of

education; (Elementary level) and they made English a strong and important subject in the second stage of education; (Primary level). They did not give any consideration to the vast cultural and linguistic differences between Sudan and England. In other words, the educational courses adopted in Sudan, were having many characteristics of the courses used in British schools. They imposed English as a medium of instruction in the third and fourth stage educational ladder; (the Secondary level and Higher education). It means that the educational subject to which utmost academic attention was offered was the English language. Various aspects of English such as 'English Penmanship', 'reading', 'grammar', 'translation', 'dictation', 'recitation' were introduced. The method applied to the beginners aimed at teaching them words and then introducing them to higher units such as phrases and sentences. Then, they were given reading material for the purpose of comprehension and translation. As the colonial Government transactions had to be made by translation from English into Arabic and vice versa, the method used for teaching English at the school was based, mainly, on translation. In other words, the method which was reigning over the activities of teaching/learning was Grammar Translation Method. Learners were forced to comprehend and translate whatever they read into its Arabic equivalent. In addition to that, students recited some passages and indulged in analyzing them grammatically. It means that an intellectual

comparison and contrast of the passages and the classical grammar of both the English and the Arabic language were going on in the name of learning English.

English periods occupied a vast portion of the educational classes. In the first year of the Primary school, English was having 7 periods a week out of 33 periods of the whole curricula of the Primary level. In the second year of the same level, the periods were increased up to 9 periods a week. Again, in the third year they were raised up to 11 periods a week. This reflects the considerable importance attached to the teaching of English. It gradually occupied the dominant position in education and became the indispensable as well as indisputable barometer for measuring the standard of education. Failure in performance in English means failure of the learner in the final examination at different stages of the educational ladder. Thus, failure in English entailed a definite failure in the whole S.S.C. that leads to the English medium higher education; namely Secondary level and Gordon College.

In Gordon College, the medium of instruction for all subjects, with the exception of Arabic and Islamic Studies, was the English language. The staff members of the college were mostly British, in addition to some mercenary teachers from Egypt and Syria.¹ Learners were made to practice writing of formal letters, précis and practice conversation in order to qualify for administrative purposes. To transform them culturally, they were made to

take a deep insight into the English classics. To accomplish this purpose the syllabus of English at Gordon College was having a strong literary bias. In fact, learners were dealing with old English in its various manifestations. It means that it taught the Sudanese learners literary English texts which were not graded.

Like Gordon College, the medium of instruction for all subjects except Arabic and Islamic Studies at the Secondary level was also English. There was heavy emphasis on literature. Students were engaged in intensive reading of literary texts. Thus, the colonial cultural motives were clear in the type of teaching material at higher levels of the educational ladder.

However, the standard of English was not up to the expectation of the colonial rulers despite the importance attached to it and the efforts exerted in its teaching. Therefore, as part of its campaign to improve the standard of English and impose it upon the Sudanese, the colonial rule set up many Commissions to investigate the extent of progress of colonial education in general and the standard of English in particular.

Commission of Inspection on Gordon College:

In 1929, the Commission of Inspection on Gordon College visited Sudan to inquire and report upon the curriculum, textbooks, the staff and the organization, the physical training and the standard attained. It found that, in the entrance examination to Gordon College

conducted in 1928, “the results obtained were so poor, especially in English...”² The main defects observed by the Commission were in connection “with the teaching of English...”³ It criticized the literary bias of the syllabus of English which was loaded by many “modes of expression which was certainly not modern English and often only doubtfully English of any period.”⁴ The content of the syllabuses was far from being “modern English”. Learners were forced to “move more or less at large over the whole train of a language” that was alien to them. The literary bias of school syllabuses of English was crippling the learners by classical English. It means that learners were forced to deal with abstract linguistic and philosophical materials. They were exposed to the “purely poetic diction” of English poetry. They confronted also “different styles and varieties of modern and old English.” In short, the English syllabuses were obsolete. The Commission discovered that the grammar of English which was taught, was a type of “irrational structure built upon the misapprehension of the 18th. century by generations of unenlightened manufacturers of school books.” It found that students were asked to write compositions of titles which deal with “vague general topics like proverbs”. Such topics were far from being related to issues of their real-life experience. Consequently, they could not manage to “confound the language of poetry with that of common life and the grammar of Shakespeare with that of the modern market

place.” It suggested that a better standard could be attained if “the immediate objectives of each stage were closely defined and if the material and methods of instruction were more completely in harmony with the ascertained results of modern linguistic science.”⁵ It assumed that the absence of clearly defined aims hindered the teacher from directing “his endeavour to the best advantage.”⁶ It suggested also the introduction of carefully graded and simplified material “in unaffected modern English.”⁷ It emphasized the accurate use of modern English so that the person “who uses the medium of English in his work ought properly to be regarded as a teacher of the language.”⁸ It has gone to the extent of suggesting “to limit the first two years of Gordon College course, to an enlargement of the pupils’ knowledge of modern English.”⁹ Moreover, it admitted the importance of thorough knowledge, on the part of the teacher, of teaching methods in improving the standard of English. Therefore, it recommended the appointment of an English master who is fully cognizant of “modern methods of studying and teaching languages to take full charge of all the English works.”

It is clear that the Commission’s main emphasis was on the modernization of the syllabus of English. Consequently, the colonial educational authorities launched a fevered program for the improvement of the teaching/learning of English in Sudan. It was embodied through the revision of the English syllabus at schools.

Teachers' training courses started conducting training courses on phonetics and oral skills. It also increased the number of hours devoted to the teaching of English. As a further incentive, they also increased the marks awarded to the subject of the English language at the Gordon College Entrance Examination so as to add to its importance and weight as a basic subject in the colonial educational establishment. Consequently, the annual educational report in 1936 claimed, "the standard of English language is improving."¹⁰

The De La Warr Commission:

Concentrated efforts to make a foot-place for English language in the colonial cultural, educational and linguistic theatre in Sudan continued. Another step was taken by the De La Warr Commission in 1937, for the improvement of the standard of English language and enhancing its hegemonic position in education. The Commission was on its way to East Africa to accomplish colonial motives. It stopped in Sudan so as to inquire and report on the curriculum, staff and organization of Gordon College and to review the method and organization of the Elementary and Intermediate schools system in relation to Gordon College. Its investigation into and report on the English language teaching/learning eclipsed the optimism expressed by the annual educational report in 1936 and exposed persisting defects in the quantity and quality of learning achieved by the Sudanese students

even after more than thirty years of the introduction of English language in Sudan. It pointed out that “the standard of English leaves much room for improvement and formed the subject of complaint by most of the representatives of employing Departments.”¹¹ It attributed the low standard of English to “insufficient staff and insufficient teaching.”¹² It suggested bringing of more teachers from England and sending some Sudanese teachers of English to England for further training and exposure to the language in its real environment. It opined, “For those who will require a thorough knowledge of English the United Kingdom is clearly the best place...”¹³ In order to enhance the position of English language in Sudan and create an educational integration with that of the colonialist it went to the extent of proposing the linking between the standard of Secondary school with that of a full British Secondary School Course. However, at the same time, it also warned against the examination systems which are set according to the British examination barometers. It considered that it is irrational to treat the answer papers written by the Sudanese learners with the same strict scoring barometers which are applied to the answer papers of British candidates. In other words, it admitted the difficulty facing the Sudanese learners in expressing themselves in written English and therefore it recommended some measures of flexibility in treating the quality and quantity of the written English by them in answer papers. It

opined, “The fact that the papers will have to be written in a foreign language by Sudanese ought to warrant some allowance, both, in respect of grammatical slips and in respect of the amount to be written.” It went on admitting, “It is difficult for Sudanese boys to reach the standard of English required by candidates for the School Certificate set for English pupils.” It suggested the replacement of the questions related to grammatical analysis of passages by questions on practical grammar and punctuation. Consequently, Cambridge School Certificate ‘for overseas’ was introduced in 1938 so as to be a yardstick to measure the standard of the Sudanese Secondary education. Consequently, the English language turned to be the main tool of performance in all subjects of the Certificate, except Arabic, and as a subject failure in, entailed failure in the whole S. S. C. certificate. This was the corner stone in the journey of English language to dominate the Sudanese educational system and act as a linguistic and cultural usurper. It Anglicized the whole educational system and made the English language the designer and the decider of the learner’s further education, career and financial status as well.

Moreover, there were vigorous changes of texts of English language in the form of the introduction of new books which were attempting to be in harmony with the new methods. Reading Method was introduced in the form of the Michael West’s series of New Method Readers and Composition as the main pillar of the

teaching of English in the Primary schools. It means that there was an apparent formal departure from the Translation Method towards the Reading Method and Direct Method so as to make the ELT program capable of enhancing the communicative and linguistic ability of the learners and more related to the colonial administrative and cultural motives. Harold Palmer's New Method Practice Books were introduced to the Intermediate or what was also called the Primary level. It was also supported by J. A. Bright's 'White Nile Readers' in order to fill the linguistic gap and enable the learner to cope with West's Reader II. The course included also 'Junior English Composition and Grammar Book' by J. A. Bright which was introduced for the purpose of fostering the learner's skill and performance in grammar and composition. The course became more pragmatic and practical and concentrated, solely, on developing reading skill of the learner. It emphasized enhancing the learner's stock of vocabulary in addition to the necessary structures. However, teachers were advised to teach grammar contextually and situationally which is not a difficult task for the native teachers, but it is, definitely a formidable task, if not impossible, for the Sudanese teachers. Moreover, to meet the urgent need of the educational establishments for more trained teachers of English, an Intermediate Teachers' Training College was established in 1949 in Bakht el Ruda.

However, the expansion of education and the

growing sense of nationalism during the 1940s affected the standard of education in general and that of English in particular. They came as a heavy blow on the standard and progress of English language, consequently, the wind of change started blowing against the sinister and hegemonic position of English language. Moreover, the by-products and shortcomings of linking the Sudanese education to that of England floated to the surface. English started affecting the standard of colonial education as a whole because the Sudanese learner couldn't cope with the heavy demand of the English-based courses and examinations. In other words, the educational system failed to function smoothly due to the excessive prominence assigned to the English language. The colonial rule felt the need for reviewing, again, the educational situation in general and that of English language in particular.

The Int'l Commission for Secondary Education:

The status and the standard of English and its role in Sudanese education were in need of a thorough re-examining. Therefore, the whole situation was examined, in 1955-56, by an International Commission for Secondary Education. The Commission investigated the difficulties involved in the use of English as the medium of both, instruction and examination. It mentioned the reasons that made English to occupy the medium of instruction in the Secondary schools, during

the early decades of the colonial rule. It observed that English was the official language of the colonial government and most Secondary schools' teachers had been British. It claimed that education in general and secondary levels in particular, was employed to prepare minor servants for the colonial rule and to be a gate-way to Higher education. Its findings exposed the disastrous nature of the colonial language policy in Sudan. The Commission found that the linking between Sudanese secondary education and the British higher educational institutions such as the Cambridge Overseas Syndicate and London University multiplied the problems, in addition to the fact that the hegemony of English and made the Sudanese educational system solely dependent on Western educational and evaluative barometers and yardsticks.

The Commission attributed the deteriorating standard of education as a whole and the increasing cases of failure of students to "the compulsory English language pass."¹⁴ In fact, students failed to cope with English as a medium of instruction and examination. Consequently, educational wastage increased. The Sudanese Examination Council 1955-56 also confirmed the findings of the Commission by reporting: Out of "246 candidates who secured certificates this year, no less than 77 failed in English language but had to be compensated with pass/fail to enable them to secure a School Certificate. It will thus be seen that the position in English is

weaker than the results suggested at first sight...It cannot be denied that a considerable number of candidates who failed this year might have passed, but for failure in English Language.”¹⁵ The Commission found that between 1946 and 1953 the average *pass percentage* of the Sudanese in the so-called Cambridge School Certificate was staggering, but it was continuously going down as indicated in the following table:¹⁶

1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953
72	68	72	51	55	52	56	50

The Commission, therefore, questioned not only the legacy which the English language, as a subject, used to enjoy, but also the issue of using English as a medium of instruction and examination. It attributed the deteriorating standard of education in general, mainly, to “the difficulties involved by the use of English as the medium of both instruction and examination, the failure of students to understand the various subjects of the curriculum intelligently and to acquire habits of clear thinking and lucid expression.”¹⁷ It means that the setting of examination papers in English multiplied the difficulties faced by learners and turned the entire learning efforts into a rote and mechanical learning. In fact, learners did not concentrate on mastering the content of the subject-matter. They, rather, resorted to memorize the framed-notes in order to pass in examination. Therefore, the attitude of the Commission towards the use of a

foreign language as a medium of education was that it considered it “both harmful and wasteful”¹⁸ and will always defeat its own purpose. It realized and admitted the educational utility and the value of using the Arabic language as a medium of instruction. Therefore, the Commission, boldly, recommended changing the medium of instruction in the Secondary schools from English to Arabic. In other words, the Commission argued in favor of Arabicization by saying: “When the medium of instruction becomes Arabic, it is expected that four years of Secondary education will allow Secondary School pupils to attain much higher standard of knowledge in the various subjects...”¹⁹ It urged the educational authorities to “bring about the change of medium of instruction as quickly as it is administratively possible.”²⁰ Thus, it is very clear that the journey of ELT in the north of Sudan during the first half of the 20th century ended with a complete failure. The colonial ambition of transforming the Sudanese linguistically utterly failed. This shows that the history of teaching English in the North of Sudan during the colonial period was a tale of a laborious rise and a grand fall of an imposed and hegemonic language.

English in the South of Sudan:

The language policy of the colonial rule took a cunning ideological dimension when the colonial government and the European missionary societies started

concentrated and fevered campaigns of evangelization and Anglicization of the pagans of the South; now called the State of Southern Sudan and in this book, it will continue to be called as the South as the book is dealing with the history of ELT there. As mentioned earlier, education in the South was left to the missionary societies. All efforts were made to remove the Arabic language and the enlightening Islamic culture from the South. Unlike that of the North where the Arabic language facilitated the initial process of administering the North and providing Western education for the northerners, education and administration in the South faced the problem of extreme linguistic diversity which characterizes the southern part of Sudan. Due to the multiplicity of the local vernaculars, there was no uniform educational plan in the South. Each missionary society resorted to launch its own educational policy. Consequently, the educational curriculum, syllabuses and teaching methods also varied greatly from one place to another. Nevertheless, the Arabic language was the lingua-franca of the South. It was successfully evolving itself as a medium of communication amongst the southern tribes because there was a peaceful co-existence between the northerners and the southerners throughout the history before the British colonialism launched its prejudicing campaigns and vicious conspiracies. Throughout the history the common southerners considered Islam an ideal religion that unifies them with the northerners on the basis of real

brotherhood and eliminates the racial and tribal barriers. Therefore, they were avid to embrace it.²¹ Even the missionary societies found it easier to use the Arabic language as a medium of instruction in missionary education. Due to the strong presence of Arabic in the South, they made the English language only a subject in the evangelization curricula. This was an unavoidable language policy that they reluctantly adopted for some times.

However, the general and dominant tendency of colonial rule was to continue to wage the war against the Arabic language and Islam in the South. In fact, the colonial policy of 'divide and rule' was reigning in the mind of the colonial rulers and controlling it. Some, and not all as we will see later on, unpractical colonial administrators did not relish the fact of Arabic being the medium of educating the southerners. In 1904, Wingate condemned the language policy that made use of the Arabic language as a medium of education. He, maliciously, considered that such a language and educational policy would produce "Arabic-speaking *Muslems* with a smattering of English."²²

To segregate the South from the North and to dig a deep cultural and ideological chasm between them, the colonial government favored the English language to be the absolute language of administration and education in the South. To achieve this ulterior motive, it exercised a considerable pressure on the missionary societies to work

against all types of what it termed as ‘Arabicization’ of education or Arabization of the southern tribes and it instigated them to switch off from Arabic medium to English medium education. The colonial rulers were wishing to see English act as the functional language of the South and the southerners being educated under the influence of Western language and missionary culture. Therefore, they prevented the use of any language other than English as a medium of education. The missionaries, desperately, employed English language to counteract the vigorous spread of the Arabic language and Islam in the South.

However, in spite of all this ill-conceived and ill-concealed campaign for the promotion of English and Western culture, the incentive to learn English in the South was not high like that of the North because education in the South was not geared for employment as in the North. Moreover, the missionary societies devoted little time for other subjects and made proselytizing the sole motive of their educational activities. Consequently, their work was described as “poor and merely a means of conversion.”²³ Their efforts were solely dedicated to convert the pagans of the South to Christianity rather than offering them useful, practical, upgraded and upgrading education. Moreover, some missionaries were having only a limited command over the English language. Therefore, they were criticized by the colonial government for failing to produce efficient clerks, technicians and

teachers.

The colonial malicious intention persisted and insisted on perpetuating its cultural, linguistic and segregating motives. In order to support the fragile position of the English language in the South, the colonial government, as early as 1910, ordered the Governors of the southern regions to encourage “the use of English as the medium through which business with natives could be transmitted.”²⁴ It resorted also to remove the northerners from the South so as to mould the southerners the way it wished. It considered that such a measure might induce the natives to learn the English language and counteract the vigorous progress of the Arabic language in the South. They were also very keen on inventing all tools that would hinder the smooth spread of the Arabic language in the South. However, the internal gimmicks and undeclared rivalry of Western churches surfaced in the South of Sudan exposing the pure imperial and narrow motives of the contradictory colonial forces. The British colonial rulers forced non-English missionary societies to attend a special course of English arranged by the University of London in order to improve their command over the English language. Moreover, the colonial government resorted to encourage English speaking missionary societies to operate in the South as a substitute to the Italians, Austrians and German Roman Catholics. In spite of all these colonial measures, the Arabic language continued to find a grand place in the hearts of the

common southerners. When colonial forces found that it was not possible to avoid the presence of Arabic language at some places, the colonial government ordered to write even the Arabic language through Roman script. In other words, they resorted to develop the local languages through Roman script so as to introduce evangelical literature in English. Their driving motive behind such an imperial orthographic step was to deprive the southerners from the privilege of getting acquainted with materials written in Arabic script as well as to strengthen the hegemony of Western orthographic system in the South.

Nevertheless, in spite of such multi-dimensional and vicious plans to promote the English language in the South, the progress of learning English was found to be still slow and only those who attended missionary schools were learning it. In other words, the English language utterly failed to be the lingua-franca of the South as lamented by the Governor General who visited the South and vehemently admitted, "...I have now fully appreciated the difficulties of making English the lingua-franca of the South."²⁵ It means that the presence of the Arabic language and its culture, in the South, was a historical and imperative fact that the colonial forces did not realize and failed, as well, to transcend. The Governor General went on admitting this fact by stating, "Wherever I penetrated, whether to the top of the Imatong or to Belgian Congo border, I found Arabic in ready use by local spokesmen of the people. In the face of this fate, we shall have to con-

sider very carefully how far it is worth effort and money at the complete suppression of Arabic. Indeed we shall have to consider whether Arabic after all....must not be our instrument.”²⁶ The colonial agents were still relentlessly conspiring to hinder the cultural unity of Sudan. They continued holding conferences and establishing committees to support English language teaching in the South.

The Rejaf Language Conference:

In 1928, the Rejaf Language Conference examined the situation of the English language in the South. The Conference was well aware of the fact that the failure of southern education to produce any valuable educational output was due to the emphasis of missionary societies on mere evangelization and use English medium education that imposed an alien cultural and linguistic environment on the indigenous population. Although the Conference was well aware of the fact that Arabic is the most suitable medium of education and communication in the South, nevertheless, it considered that the return to the Arabic language “would open the door for the spread of Islam, Arabicize the South, and introduce the Northern Sudanese outlook.”²⁷ The Conference thought that it would be better to introduce the teaching of English in the first stage of education, namely, “in the upper classes of the Elementary schools.”²⁸ It also resorted to the old policy of using Arabic in foreign script. It opines, “colloquial

Arabic in Roman script will also be required in certain communities when the use of no other vernacular is feasible.”²⁹ Such a step was contrary to the colonial policy in the North. The colonial rule has already rejected the idea of teaching English in the first stage of the educational ladder in the North, but it was proposed and implemented in the South so as to continue a perpetual war against the Arabic language. It reflects the importance attached to the teaching of English in the South and exposes the colonial malicious intention to divide a nation which was united throughout the history. They were ready to take even unscientific steps and haphazard decisions to enforce their vicious colonial policy. As a further cunning motive, the Chairman of the Conference J. G. Matthew announced that the government had decided “to replace Arabic by English as the language for correspondence...in government offices”³⁰ in the South.

In Mongala Meeting, in 1929, J. G. Matthew took further step and ordered to make English the medium of instruction in the southern post-Elementary technical schools. He stated that the curriculum of those schools would include significant academic elements of English.³¹ The colonial government took further measures in favor of promoting the English language in the South. It launched a professional syllabus for the Elementary schools. Its motive was to improve the linguistic foundation of the learner for further cultural mutilation and metamorphosing. In a Memorandum in 1930, the same

unjustifiable antagonism towards Arabic was expressed in spite of the fact that the southerners liked and even felt proud of speaking the Arabic language and dressing the uniform of the northerners. Harold MacMichael, the then Civil Secretary, viciously stated, “An official unable to speak the local vernacular should try to use English when speaking to Government employees and servants and even, if possible, to chiefs and natives. In any case, the use of an interpreter is preferable to the use of Arabic, until the local language can be used....In short, whereas at present Arabic is considered by many natives of the South as the official and, as it were, the fashionable language, the object of all should be to counteract this idea by every practical means.”³²

However, in spite of these vicious and cunning campaigns by the colonial government and the missionary societies for the teaching of English in the South, the whole effort was described as failure in all respects.³³ The reports of the 1930s offered disappointing accounts about the standard of the English language in the South. They seemed to tell that the English language in the South had faced its worst situations. The 1931 annual report came out reflecting a frustrating output in its teaching and showing the problems hindering its promotion as well. It observed, “There are difficulties of staff....the standard reached is not very high...”³⁴ The tone of the report of 1933 seemed to be more pessimistic. It stated, “Progress in the teaching of English..... is showing lack of teachers able to give

effective teaching...”³⁵

The note of dissatisfaction with the standard and achievement in English culminated when the educational administration itself doubted the wisdom behind the use of English as a medium of instruction in education. English became a serious obstacle in the way of acquiring knowledge. The annual report of 1934 considered that “teaching in English, after only a slight knowledge of the language had been gained...., is a serious obstacle to progress and the assimilation of what is taught.”³⁶ Consequently, the colonial authorities realized the failure of English to be the medium of education. They frankly admitted, “In no other ways does it seem possible to overcome the undesirable results of teaching in English before the pupils can properly understand and think in that language.”³⁷ Suggestions were made forward for teaching English as a subject only and “conducting the first three classes in the vernacular....”³⁸ This indicates not only the failure of English to be the lingua-franca of the South, but also a clear retreat of the colonial government, from imposing English as the medium of education in the South.

In fact, the colonial activities in the South were loaded with incurable defects and malicious intentions. In 1936, C. W. William, the colonial Assistant Director of Education exposed the defects of missionary education. He lamented that the missionary societies were “neither interested nor have any understanding or

appreciation....in their teaching.”³⁹ They were involved in “the pursuit of religion to the exclusion of all other things.”⁴⁰ In fact, they were administering incurable diseases upon the southerners. The manifestations of those incurable diseases came to the surface now after the South got separated from the North. The psychopathic war-lords who were fed by Western education and prejudices drove the newly born State into a complete chaos. They, in fact, established a failure state. The southern common man now realized that he is a victim of his own corrupt and colonial-minded politicians and not the victim of the North. Now the people of the State of the Southern Sudan are yearning for those days of, whom they used to call, sarcastically, as, Jallaba. If they go deep into true and correct history, they will realize that the common Northerners were their true brothers.

The Int’l Commission for Secondary Education:

The direct reference to the disastrous effect of imposing English upon the southerners came from the International Commission for Secondary Education in 1955. The Commission confronted the colonial rule with facts which the latter could not perceive or accept since the beginning of the 20th. century. The Commission’s realization of the grand status of the Arabic language and the speed of its spreading throughout Sudan was one of the historical and imperative realities which the colonial rule failed to perceive, accept or even counteract.

Therefore, the Commission initiated its recommendations in favor of using the Arabic language as a medium of instruction not only in the North, but also in the southern education. It has gone to the extent of recommending to unify the language policy all over the country. This was basically because the Commission found that, due to the use of English as a medium, pupils could not “benefit much by their study of other subjects....”⁴¹ It found “little argument in favor of English being....suitable as the medium of instruction.”⁴² It went on arguing in favor of Arabicization of education in the South. It stated that Arabic, being already the lingua-franca of the South would “be easier to teach...and this should happen immediately in government schools and as soon as possible in the missionary schools.”⁴³

Moreover, the ten years plan of 1946-56 issued by the central government paid special attention to the educational and linguistic situation of the South. It recommended that Arabic should be introduced in the southern schools with a view to establish a unified educational policy for the whole country. It seems that there was a deep realization among colonial administrators that the South will never be able to survive without the North. By issuing and declaring, in its last days, such reports which expose its failure educational and linguistic agenda, colonialism wanted to draw a false positive image of itself as a herald for the unity of Sudan, but it knows very well that half a century of brainwashing

of the Southerners has done colossal and incurable damage in their impression towards their counterparts in the North. In 1949 a Legislative Assembly for both the North and the South was formed. It was well aware of the importance of adopting a unified language policy for the whole Sudan. The first Sudanese Minister of Education informed the members of the Assembly, "As the Sudan is one country, sharing one set of political situation, it is of great importance that there should be one language which is understood by all its citizens. That language could only be Arabic, and must, therefore, be taught in all our schools."⁴⁴

In this way, even in the South also the course of events seemed to be similar to that of the North as far as the standard and position of English was concerned. The English language failed to be the medium of education or the lingua-franca of the South and whatever meager knowledge which had been achieved during the colonial fevered campaigns witnessed an irrevocable regression in the post-colonial period. In other words, it means that the failure of English in progressing in the field of administration of the South was a natural result of its failure in progressing in the field of education in the North. It confirms the fact that it was a policy of an imposed language which failed to sustain itself all over the Sudan. It indicates that the language policy adopted and followed by the colonial rule was a policy of imposing an alien language on the Sudanese society as a whole. Therefore, it

met its imperative destiny and failed both in administration and education throughout Sudan. The above discussion indicates and exposes clearly that the colonial educational and language policy in the South of Sudan was based, mainly, on cunning and imperial colonial motives rather than on sincere educational and civilizing considerations as it usually claims. It could neither educate the southerners nor could it improve their lot. In fact, it harmed the produced intelligentsia, prejudiced them and destroyed the natural course of life the southerners used to lead and enjoy. Due to their snobbery, the colonial forces were even sarcastic and critical over the personal characters of those southerners who have been converted. As early as 1900, a colonial figure by name of Colonel Jackson remarked, “a Black when converted becomes a scamp, loafer, scoundrel and liar, whereas they are now happy, contented, honest and vice unknown.”⁴⁵ Moreover, some British officials considered that for the Blacks “Islam was ‘better’ and more suitable religion than Christianity.”⁴⁶ They also admitted that Islam is capable of promoting styles of morals and political behaviours which are intelligible and predictable.⁴⁷ Therefore, some colonial officials were inclined “to favour Islamic influence in the South.”⁴⁸

In fact, the colonial educational and language policy in the South of Sudan was a source of overwhelming suffering for the southerners themselves. It only prejudiced many of them against their counterparts

in the North. The West-instigated war broke out in the South and the southerners are finding, to date and even after establishing their own State, the safe haven with their brothers in the North, speaking Arabic and experiencing a real sense of brotherhood in the culture of their northern counterparts.

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History of ELT in Sudan from 1956 to Date

Post-colonial Language Policy in the North:

The colonial rule left behind an educational and language policy that aimed at regional, cultural and social division. The post-colonial governments were supposed to lay down and implement a new language policy based on the recommendations of the International Commission for Secondary Education which advocated the switching over to Arabic medium educational system all over Sudan. Unfortunately, nothing like that was worked out. Brainwashed and prejudiced politicians and educators were well aware of the defects of English medium education, but things were left to go awry.

In the North, the colonial period ended up and left behind an educational system that crippled the learner by imposing English as a medium of instruction. Few learners were succeeding in transcending the linguistic hindrances posed by English medium education and passing up to the higher education. In the wake of the departure of the colonial army, even those who passed to the higher education failed to cope with English medium higher education. It means that the relative higher standard of English which was achieved during the colonial period can be attributed to the tangible achievement of a few learners who excelled in English in a highly selective

educational system that made English be-all and end-all. It was not a general phenomenon that benefited the common learner. In fact, the dominant public opinion was not in favour of English medium education. The first Vice-Chancellor of the University of Khartoum accused English medium higher education of being “a real strain on the part of pupils and a handicap in the assimilation and expression....”¹ He went on complaining, “This difficulty of a foreign language; the fetters of an external examination, and the poor performance at the lower stages of education, all continued to lower the standard of the Secondary school achievement.”² It means that there was a steady and continuous decline in the educational standard as a result of English medium education and the steady decline in the standard of English as well. Many post-colonial committees and commissions attempted to investigate the ELT situation and offer suggestions to improve its standard. Unfortunately, they could not do anything valuable to improve the learner’s achievement. They only delivered contradictory and vague recommendations with regard to ELT in Sudan.

Matta Akrawi Committee:

In 1958 a committee of eleven Sudanese educators was appointed under the chairmanship of Matta Akrawi, a UNESCO expert so as to study the aims of education and the educational organization in the three stages of education. It recommended the changing of the

educational ladder from 4+4+4 to 6+3+3. As far as the language policy was concerned, it supported the changing of the medium of instruction from English to Arabic in the Secondary schools as had been recommended by the International Commission for Secondary Education in 1955-56. Supporting the recommendations of the Commission on Secondary Education to Arabicize education, Matta Akrawi Committee asserted that the Commission's recommendations had been "calculated to raise the level of understanding of the Secondary school students, and therefore, their attainment of a higher academic standard."³ At the same time, it also recognized the importance of maintaining a good standard of the English language teaching. Therefore, it suggested that English language, as a subject, should "be introduced in the fourth year of the six-year proposed Primary school."⁴ It argued that this "will help compensate for any loss which might ensue from changing the language of instruction to Arabic in Secondary schools."⁵

Kadhim's Report:

The English language continued to get attention more than it deserved. A report of a second UNESCO expert; Kadhim who, in 1960, rejected the recommendation of Akrawi Committee to introduce the teaching of English in the fourth year of the proposed primary level of education, was produced. It based its argument on the idea that such a step would face a

chronic shortage of teachers and would affect, negatively, the position of Arabic language, the mother tongue of the learners, in education. The report based its argument on the fact that “the general practice in most countries is that learning a foreign language begins in the second stage of education. The emphasis in the first stage of education should be on the mother tongue.”⁶ Consequently, in 1962, a plan of education rejected the idea of introducing English at the elementary level. It was decided that English should be introduced as a subject in the General Secondary stage (second stage of the educational ladder). It seems to have accepted the stand-still situation and it argued that the standard of English to be attained should be that already established.⁷ It is clear that the steady decline of the standard of English language was out of control of the educational authorities. W. A. Murry described the perplexities facing the English language in Sudan by stating: “The dilution of the British expatriate staff by expatriates who are not native English speakers, the failure of the University to produce enough well-qualified Sudanese graduates to staff the Secondary Schools in place of retiring expatriates; the expansion of the school curricula to give greater choice in the Sudan Certificate Examination; and the consequent re-grouping of subjects so that English literature, once compulsory and a main source of linguistic strength compete on unfavourable terms with Islamic religious knowledge; the English language has not been helped by the retention of

out-date type of syllabus and by the failure of the schools to exploit new techniques and methods of teaching English.”⁸ It is very clear that W. A. Murry gave a grim description to the situation of English language teaching in Sudan. His statement indicates that the standard of English language in Sudan has reached a point of no return as far as its deterioration is concerned. Moreover, it seems that the local educational administrators were being tossed by heaps of recommendations of foreign bodies, nevertheless, they could not halt the deteriorating standard of English language.

The Arabicization of the Secondary level commenced in 1965 and continued till 1969. This naturally had had an adverse effect on the standard of English language. Therefore, W. A. Murry was of the opinion that more priority must be given to the “maintenance of standard during the transition.”⁹ The continuous decline in the standard of English continued and there was no hope to improve it. It indicates that, in the post-colonial period, the English language would never enjoy the importance and status assigned to it during the colonial rule.

The Conference of ‘English in the Sudan’:

The Conference titled ‘English in the Sudan’ was held in 1966. It investigated the syllabuses of English for, both, the Intermediate and the Secondary levels. It discovered the existence of a wide gap between the

linguistic abilities of learners at the Intermediate and the Secondary levels due to absence of a uniform syllabus. It found the syllabuses varied “too much from one school to another.”¹⁰ It described the materials used for teaching the English language as “either childish or obsolete.”¹¹ It complained of the poor qualification of teachers who were “untrained and inexperienced.”¹² Therefore, it recommended the preparation of “an integrated syllabus covering, both, Intermediate and Secondary levels.”¹³ It also argued that “all practicing teachers should attend in-service training courses.”¹⁴

J. A. Bright’s Report:

In 1967, J. A. Bright also investigated the causes of the decline of the standard of English. The report of J. A. Bright stated that the teaching of English was facing problems because of “untrained graduates, frequent staff change, short contract expatriates.”¹⁵ It called for a realistic and effective teaching of English in order to counteract conditions created by Arabicization of Secondary Schools. The report went on asserting that improvement of the standard of English language could be achieved if there was a “general consensus of opinion among teachers, those training the teachers, those inspecting them, those conducting the examinations, those running in-service courses, and those providing aids and aid about what should be aimed at, and what methods are likely to be useful.”¹⁶ Consequently, those in charge of

ELT in Sudan launched a desperate project of modernization of English syllabuses and examinations.

A new provisional structural syllabus was adopted in 1969. The University of Khartoum also introduced remedial courses in the form of special course for each faculty.

The Change of the Educational Ladder from 4-4-4 to 6-3-3 and its Effects on ELT:

The change of the educational ladder in 1970 from 4+4+4 to 6+3+3 and the educational expansion came as major blows to the teaching of English. The students' first encounter with English was still in the second stage, 'the General Secondary level' previously called 'Intermediate.' Moreover, the new ladder increased the average age of students entering the General Secondary Schools from 11/12 to 13/14. It means that it delayed the students' first encounter with the process of learning English. It also decreased the duration of learning English from 8 to 6 years of the schooling period. In addition to that, there was also a decrease in the time allotted for teaching/learning of English from 10/11 periods a week to 7/8 periods. In Higher Secondary Schools also there was a reduction in the periods allotted for the English language from 9/10 to 6/7 periods a week.

Commenting on educational expansion and the deplorable situation of English, M. Macmillan states in 1970, "Educational expansion beyond the limits of

facilities available affects the teaching of 'skill' subject more than that of 'content' subjects. English, like any language, is primarily a 'skill' subject, and the increase in the number of students attending secondary schools has reduced the opportunities for effective and controlled exposure to, and practice in, the use of that language. This, more than any other factor, has led to the deteriorating standards of English."¹⁷ The steady and chronic decline in the standard of English can be realized from the annual percentage given in the following table.¹⁸

1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968
70.3	68.4	66.2	57.9	47.9	43.2

The standard of ELT continued declining. In 1972, a modified English teaching material labeled 'English for the Sudan' was adopted to meet the situation emerged as a result of the change of the educational ladder and to tackle the steady deterioration in the standard of English.

Report on 'English Teaching in the GSS in the Democratic Republic of the Sudan, 1972':

In 1972, a report on 'English Teaching in the General Secondary Schools in the Democratic Republic of the Sudan', enumerated the factors leading to the deterioration of English as follows: (1) Inadequate initial and advanced in-service training. (2) Inadequate supply of trained and experienced senior teachers. (3)

Frequent transfer of teachers from one school to another. (4) Shortage of teachers as a result of secondment to abroad and to other Departmental duties. (5) Inadequate supply and distribution of books and equipment. (6) Inadequate provision of accommodation for teachers coming from out of the region.¹⁹ Thus, English, more than science and technology, continued to engage the attention of the brainless Sudanese educators.

Proposals of the Committee Formed by the Curriculum Conference, 1973:

In 1973, a Conference on curriculum was held. It formed a committee to investigate the possibility of introducing the teaching of English into the fifth and the sixth class of the Elementary level. It prepared many studies which included:

- (1) The educational and linguistic principles related to the issue of learning a foreign or a second language at an early age of childhood.
- (2) The recommendations to prepare sufficient numbers of teachers to accomplish the task of teaching English in the upper classes of the Elementary level.
- (3) The proposals to prepare suitable textbooks to be used for teaching English in classes fifth and sixth of the Elementary level.
- (4) The estimations of the costs of training teachers in duty at different levels of education.²⁰

On the basis of these studies, the Committee made a proposal similar to that of Akrawi Committee by recommending the introduction of English language teaching into class 5th. of the first stage of education, that is of the Elementary school. It also recommended the following:

- (1) Necessary measures must be taken to set up a specialized body to examine the texts of English in use in the first and the second years of the General Secondary level and evaluate the feasibility of using them, temporarily, in teaching English in classes fifth and sixth of the Elementary level until the production of a new course sees the light.
- (2) To set up a specialized committee in order to devise a new teaching material for classes fifth and sixth based on scientific vision that enables it to reach the target goals.
- (3) The members of the specialized committee must be in full-time engagement in the task of devising the new material.
- (4) The committee must be given a time-limit to accomplish the task and should get all required assistance and help from the concerned authorities.
- (5) Testing the new teaching material for classes fifth and sixth in some schools, before approving it for common use in all schools.
- (6) The process of testing the new material must receive full support from the ministry of education and

co-operation from schools, administrations and teachers of English.

- (7) Training of sufficient numbers of teachers of English who will teach the subject in classes fifth and sixth of the Elementary level.
- (8) Preparing sufficient numbers of teachers' trainers before launching the training course so that they can prepare the plans and program of training.
- (9) Teachers' training must be held in summer vacation.
- (10) The training duration must be six weeks and should be considered a preliminary training and therefore they must complete it in the future training courses.
- (11) Teachers' training institutes must include, in their curricula, a suitable course of training the teachers of English that is capable of qualifying teachers and enabling them to enhance the process of learning English.
- (12) To use all educational facilities available to follow-up and support the teachers of English.²¹

However, the whole investigation and proposals remained only ink on papers. They did not find any hearing ear to listen to them.

The Report of SSR in the Dept. of English, in Bakht el Ruda TTI, 1975:

In 1975, the Secretariat of Syllabus Revi-

sion, in the Department of English, in Bakht el Ruda Teachers' Training Institute; now turned into Bakht el Ruda University, issued a report and confessed the stand-still situation. It opined, "The present syllabuses in use in the General Secondary Schools are the same teaching material in use since 1950s....though it witnessed some edition and revision. The last modification it underwent was when it was reset in order to make it suit the three years period of the General Secondary schools of the new educational ladder."²² The stand-still situation was basically because there was a general agreement that the operating material should not be reduced or severed off till another new course replaced it. The report of the Secretariat of Syllabus Revision went on recommending the following:

- (1) Conducting necessary studies that pave the way for preparing a new integrated course that starts from the first year of the General Secondary level and extends itself up to the Higher Secondary level so as to replace the current course,
- (2) The new course must either be prepared by local experts and be capable of realizing the desired objectives, or it must be selected from a ready course, but in both the cases, the new course must undergo a sufficient experiment before being generalized in all schools,
- (3) Increasing of the time allotted to the teaching of English from 9 to 10 periods per week,

- (4) Continuing the work on the Teacher's Guidebook so that to program, co-ordinate and concentrate the current course.²³

Thus, it seems that local as well as foreign committees, commissions and personnel continued to deliver what they viewed as measures, proposals and recommendations to improve the teaching/learning of English. Nevertheless, all these efforts could not improve the standard of English in Sudan. The situation of English persisted to deteriorate and the plight of English became bleaker than ever before. The number of students "in classes soared...the morale of both teachers and pupils was.....at a lowest ebb."²⁴ Due to the frustrating situation which seemed to be incurable, it was even suggested to "drop English from the school curriculum and concentrate resources at the end of the school in preparation for English course before university level."²⁵ Those who were in charge of education could not realize the implications of the changing situation of ELT in Sudan nor could they perceive the need of the new scenario in which English would be taught. They went on listening to various commissions, committees and reports and administering, haphazardly, ineffective measures to deal with the situation.

Julian Gorbluth's Report, 1976:

In 1976, a report entitled 'Factors

Responsible for the Decline in the Standard of English, with Suggestions and Recommendations'²⁶ was prepared by an alien expert by name of Julian Gorbluth, Head of English Curricula and Book Section, Ministry of Education. The report admitted that the core of ELT program, particularly at the Higher Secondary level was based on the English language program which has not been significantly revised or reformed since it has been implemented in 1930s. The report went on describing the course as far removed from the actual need and the environment of the Sudanese students. It observed a chronic decline in the standard of English language in Sudan. It stated that the main causes of decline in the standard of English were:

- (1) Educational expansion.
- (2) The inability of the system to cope up by producing trained and proficient teachers.
- (3) Brain drain.
- (4) Lack of suitable textbooks.
- (5) The reduction in the time allotted to the teaching of English.
- (6) The average number of students in the class which tends to be high.

It recommended the following:

- (1) The preparation of a new integrated six years English course.
- (2) The allocation of more time for teaching English.

- (3) A phased reduction in the size of the number of students in classes.
- (4) Reversal of the policy of allowing senior Sudanese teachers of English to work abroad.
- (5) Launching of an intensive training course for, both, General Secondary and Higher Secondary level teachers of English.

Introduction and Implementation of ‘The Nile Course’:

Consequently, English reform scheme was started with a survey of the language needs throughout the country. Then, a trial and testing of a material at the two levels followed and ended with the preparation of the six years English language integrated course which was called ‘The Nile Course’. It came into actual use in 1980 and was fully implemented by 1983. It was implemented as a program of English language teaching all over Sudan.

The Educational Conference of 1984:

The standard of English, if any was there, continued sinking in deterioration and English language was not existing at all. In other words, nothing positive could be achieved in the field of ELT in Sudan. This was made clear by an Educational Conference held in 1984 after four years of the initiation of the integrated English language courses ‘The Nile Course’. A paper titled ‘The Problems of English Language’ was presented in the Conference. It echoed the same note of Gorbuth’s Report

of 1976. It noted the steady decline in the standard of English language and attributed it to change of the educational ladder which decreased the number of years and class-periods students used to experience in the process of formal learning of English. It also noted the late commencement of the study of English and the employment of unqualified teachers, who had themselves studied English, as a subject, for only six years, to teach English in the general Secondary level. It observed that many of the Secondary level teachers of English had graduated from disciplines other than English and were untrained as well. It described the training courses themselves as “inadequate” and could not meet the requirements of the new course of English while 50% of those teachers who were selected for the in-service training course did not complete it. Moreover, it observed the overcrowded classes and the tangible decline in the students’ motivation to learn English. Consequently, teachers were facing more responsibilities in an unfavourable teaching situation which suffers from the complete absence of teaching aids, shortage of textbooks and their late arrival. It echoed the same note of the ‘Conference on Curriculum’ of 1973, by recommending introduction of English language teaching in class fifth of Elementary level and training the teachers of English. However, as a result of the continuous decline in the standard of English, it was decided in 1989 to review the whole English language program of both, the General

Secondary and Higher Secondary levels. Nevertheless, no prescription seemed to be capable of improving the standard of English language in Sudan. Conducting meetings and setting up committees and commissions were the only things educators could do to deal with the deteriorating standard of English.

The Change of the Educational Ladder from 6-3-3 to 8-3 and its Effects on ELT:

In 1990, a General Educational Conference recommended the change of the educational ladder from 6+3+3 to 8+3. The new educational ladder consisted of the Basic level + the Secondary levels; (8+3). It seems to have come to the same conclusion of the 'Conference on Curriculum' (1973) and that of the 'Educational Conference' (1984). It decided that the students' first encounter with English would be in class fifth of the Basic level. This means that the number of years in which students would undergo the formal learning of English has been increased by one year. In other words, it became seven years out of the whole schooling period in the new educational ladder which extends up to eleven years. But there was an obvious decrease in the number of periods of English in the time-table of the Basic level. In 1991-92, the timetable of the initial grades displayed 3 periods of English a week whereas it was 6 periods in the previous ladder.

Moreover, the first text of a proposed integrated

course of a new syllabus called ‘Spine Series’ which stand for ‘Sudan Practical Integrated National English Series’ was launched in the 1992-93 academic year to replace, gradually, the previous syllabus; ‘The Nile Course’. The periods allotted to teaching of English have been also increased to 6 periods a week from the academic year 1992-93.

Declaration of Arabicization of Higher Education:

Those steps were coinciding with another step embodied in a vigorous process of phasing out the English language from being the medium of instruction in higher educational levels. In 1990, the Conference of Higher Education decided to change the medium of instruction in higher educational institutions from English to the Arabic language. It argued that the Arabicization of the medium of instruction aimed at facilitating the understanding of lectures and raising the academic achievement of students as the Arabic language is easier than an alien language. In fact, the political and educational authorities went for implementing the history-deep idea of Arabicization because the academic standard of English medium higher education was collapsing and there was a wide dissatisfaction among the teaching staff about the students’ achievement in English when he comes to higher education. The Head of the Department of English, University of Khartoum, wrote to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, “Looking at the matter from our

end...something drastic must be done or we will soon reach a point of no return as far as the teaching of English in this country was concerned.”²⁷ It means that even the examination system of the subject of English went awry and became unreliable. In this way the journey of the English language teaching and learning in the north of Sudan in the post-colonial period failed to record any tangible progress. In fact, like its history during the colonial period, it was a tale of a continuous decline and deterioration. The failure of various ELT programmes to rescue its standard was caused by repetitive recommendations of different committees and commissions which were themselves unfeasible and full of wrong prescriptions.

Post-colonial Language Policy in the South:

In the South, and after the departure of the colonial army, there was a general tendency of adopting Arabic as a medium of education and its orthographic system as a means of writing the local vernaculars. It was supported even by educational committees and commissions. Akrawi Committee was of the opinion that English must be introduced into southern education as only a subject as it was the case in the rest of the country. It recommended the use of the orthographic system of Arabic in writing the major southern vernaculars in order to use them as mediums of instruction in the first two or three grades of schooling. It advocated the introduction of

Arabic from the second grade of the Elementary education and using it as a medium of instruction at the Secondary level. Unfortunately, in this regard, it seems to have gone wrong. It could not realize the difficulties involved in teaching the first grades through the local vernaculars and the chronic shortage of teachers capable to accomplish such a task. It could not realize the fact that the sticking to local vernaculars in the South contributed to the intellectual poverty of the Southerners and the backwardness of educational and cultural achievement of the region. This fact was already echoed as early as 1956 in the report of the International Commission on Secondary Education which admitted the difficulties and risks involved in using the local vernaculars as mediums of instruction. The report opines, "It would be a waste of time and energy to teach the children of the South in their own vernaculars in which they will not be able to pursue any reading after they leave school. Such vernaculars have no literature and cannot be used as cultural media."²⁸

Nevertheless, due to the natural tendency of the southerners to learn Arabic, it was successfully moving up the educational ladder and retaking the place of not only English, but also of the local vernaculars. Hence, the hope to provide the southerners a useful education in Arabic and an enlightened cultural transformation emerged again. Moreover, by 1961, the major local vernaculars were re-written in the Arabic script. It means that the practice of writing the local vernaculars in the

Roman script had ended up. The educational plan of 1962 considered that the use of Arabic as the medium of instruction in the South should not be a problem since many pupils whose mother tongue was not Arabic, used it as a medium of instruction in the Northern Sudan. Therefore, it was recommended to develop special Arabic syllabuses for the Preparatory level to suit the requirements of the South.²⁹ Unfortunately, education in the South was seriously affected by the eruption of the civil war in 1960s. The civil war of which seeds were planted and watered by colonial forces disrupted not only the educational activities, but also the whole life of the southerners. The Southern war-lords were not serious about the destiny of the common man in the South, rather, they were keen on serving a foreign agenda that acts against the true desires and options of the Southerners themselves who were always in favor of a peaceful coexistence with the North in a unified State.

A Peace Accord, which was signed in 1972, ended the civil war. Unfortunately, there was a desperate campaign by the southern war-lords to play a colonial role on the Sudanese political theatre. In fact, they were not politicians, but war-lords only as the term politician has a meaning that they can't perceive or practice. A true politician puts into consideration the major interests of his people and he never acts against them. However, the Southern war-lords, again tried to lend the English language a legitimacy that it did not deserve in the South

and could not perform in the past. They were oblivious of, or failed to remember its apparent failure, during the colonial rule, to be the lingua-franca or the medium of administration and education in the South. As a 'top-down' policy, some Southern war-lords imposed English, again, on the southerners and wished to make it the principal language of the southern region. The Southern Regional Self-Government Act (1972) went as under:

Chapter II, Section 5, Language: Arabic shall be the official language for the Sudan and English the principal language for the Southern Region without prejudice to the use of any language or languages which may serve a practical necessity for the efficient and expeditious discharge of executive and administrative function of the region.

Interpretation:

1. Arabic is the official language of the Democratic Republic of the Sudan.
2. English shall be the working language of the southern region as a matter of convenience in order to meet the aspirations of the people of the region and to ensure the efficient running of the region in all its departments and units.
3. Local languages shall be encouraged for the following reasons:
 - i. to serve as a practical necessity for the easy discharge of duties in day-to-day business,
 - ii. for the promotion of the pattern of culture of

the people of the region.³⁰

However, this reckless policy which tried to make English the ‘principal language of the South’ and to employ local vernaculars for the so-called ‘promotion of the pattern of culture of the people’ was rejected by the southerners who realized its destructive nature on the intellect of the growing generation in the South. In an educational conference held in July 1972, language was one of the main subjects discussed in this conference which was headed by Sayyed Joseph Oduho, the then Acting Regional Minister of Education for the South. In his statement, he appealed to the Conference to tackle the problem of language in the South from merely educational point of view and not to be prejudiced by the wrong colonial political attitude toward Arabic. He has rightly observed that the children of the South should not waste their time learning vernaculars, and that vernaculars should not continue as media of instruction in upper grades.

This means that many southerners realized the difficulty of imposing English and local vernaculars on pupils, but it seems that the colonial lobby was very strong in the Conference. The Conference decided the following: “The Conference believes if the teaching of tribal language is introduced right from First Year Primary for any period as medium of instruction whereas Arabic would be introduced from the same stage as a

subject, southern pupils will be put at a disadvantageous position with their counterparts in the north in the national certificate examination. But as a political expedient, the teaching of these languages should be introduced, and ways of their teaching could be found.”³¹

When teaching of the local vernaculars and using them as medium of education had failed, the High Executive Council of the region reviewed the language policy. It stated, “It has been decided that in future, in rural areas, the first two years of teaching should be in local languages, after which teaching would be mostly in Arabic. To help those children returning from countries where their education has been in English or French, it is hoped to arrange classes in such a way that they will be able to continue their learning in either of these languages. Larger schools may have one class learning in Arabic with English taught as a subject, and a second class learning in English with Arabic as a subject.”³²

These decisions show that there was a deep realization among the southern masses that Arabic is the most effective medium that can enhance their educational, intellectual and cultural growth. Unfortunately, war-lords and pseudo-politicians, for hegemonic and narrow political motives, were reluctant to introduce a wider program of Arabic education in the South. Their motive was to keep the southerners educationally backward and intellectually poor; the situation that enables the colonial-minded pseudo-

politicians and war-lords to monopolize the political affairs of the South for their own vested interest.

Again, in a muddled plan, the Regional Assembly moved ahead, in 1974, and made the English language “the medium of instruction in the educational institutions of the region...”³³ Ironically enough, the Executive Council of the southern region which was well aware of the impracticability and infeasibility of the Regional Assembly initiative, averted the resolution of the Assembly and planned a new language policy where English became the medium of instruction, only, in the higher Secondary level. This fact confirms the idea that there was not a minimum agreement, among the southern politicians, on the language policy in the South nor were they aware of the history and its firm and established norms which proved, without doubt, the alien nature of English language in the South. In other words, the history repeated itself in the hands of some rootless southern pseudo-politicians who wished to achieve what the colonial forces could not attain during the colonial rule; namely, the cultural and linguistic segregation of the South from the North. It seems that those prejudiced pseudo-politicians closed their eyes to the reality, past and contemporary, cherished a colonial heritage and tried to continue a colonial policy. But these fevered attempts to resurrect English in the South failed and met a fateful end. The ramified consequences of the haphazard language policy, launched by the Regional Assembly and

the Executive Council of the South, were that many students failed to cope even with the reduced doses of English prescribed and administered by the amended resolution of the High Executive Council of the South. Liza Sandell has rightly described the situation of English language in the South by saying, "English virtually disappeared....students in the Intermediate schools often reach the Secondary schools with very little English at all, and certainly not enough to use it as a medium of instruction."³⁴ Moreover, Bona Malwal, a southern politician, lamented: "Many students left their schools for Secondary schools in the North because they could not cope with English."³⁵

It is clear that the language plans implemented in the South in the wake of the Peace Accord of 1972 was an embodiment of ill intentions and became a source of overwhelming evils for the southerners themselves. In 1980, the Regional Minister of Education admitted, "In practice, 'the language policy' has caused alarming unrest in schools, particularly, in the Secondary schools."³⁶ Moreover, some rational southern educators found that it was impossible and irrational to continue imposing the English language as a medium of instruction on Arabic speaking masses in the South. In 1980-81, and as a result of the disastrous effect of English being, solely, the medium of instruction in the southern higher educational system, the Director of Education in the Southern Region initiated a compromising measure which ordered that,

“English and Arabic be used concurrently as mediums of instruction.”³⁷ This decision reflects an obvious retreat from adopting the English language as the monopolizing medium of instruction in the South. However, this compromise seemed to be insufficient to tackle the deteriorating standard of southern education caused by the imposition of English as a medium of instruction. The most critical account of the situation of education and the catastrophic effect of English being the medium of instruction in the southern education came from Gill Scharer, the Advisor for English at Meridi Institute for Teachers’ Training. His report exposed the existence of a sharp contrast between the attitudes of some practical educators and practitioners on the one hand and of those prejudiced southern pseudo-politicians on the other hand. He seemed to be more realistic with regard to the language policy in the South. He described the teaching of English in the South as “intermittent or at worst non-existent, and there are even...schools where regular English language lessons cannot be guaranteed.”³⁸ He went on projecting the tragic situation caused by English medium education by stating, “Those who have no access to effective English teaching....are unable to take full advantage of academic education beyond the General Secondary level.”³⁹ He exposed the disastrous effect of the wrong language policy which produced a “large number of Secondary entrants with only minimum ability to speak and understand English and often a total inability

to read and write it.”⁴⁰ He attributed this sad state of affairs to the linguistic burden in the form of English medium imposed upon the students. He recommended abolishing English medium education entirely from the South. He, boldly, suggested that “it would be logical if Arabic were the language of instruction...”⁴¹ in the southern educational system. Regarding the teaching of English as a subject, he suggested that, “It would not, in fact, matter if English were not begun until the General Secondary Schools as is now the case in the North.”⁴²

This was the post-colonial story of English language policy in the South of Sudan when the then Regional Minister of Education declared that, “the education system collapsed”⁴³ as a result of the civil war which broke out again in 1983. The whole story reveals that the English language was planted in an environment which was not its. Consequently, it failed to survive or flourish. It withered when the circumstances which led to its introduction and implantation into Sudan ceased to exist. It failed to record any tangible progress or to create any major intellectual breakthrough on the Sudanese territory for almost a century. Therefore, it was a burden rather than a boon for the Sudanese educational system.

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Linguistic Motives of Colonialism: A Critical Analysis

Throughout the colonial rule, English was employed to perform various roles in Sudan. As it is clear from the content of the previous chapter, the colonial rule was having many ulterior motives behind imposing the English language on the Sudanese. What Kachru B. has outlined as functions of an imposed language have been in vogue in Sudan during the colonial rule. These functions, according to Kachru B., are “the instrumental function (the medium of learning in the educational system); the regulative function (the legal and administrative system); the interpersonal function (intra and international link language); and finally the imaginative/innovative function (to develop the literature of subjugated culture’s linguistic system).”¹ During the colonial rule, English was playing almost the same functions in Sudan which were employed to realize various motives. The English language was introduced into the educational system, both, in the North and in the South of Sudan and since there were two different educational systems in the North and in the South, the role played by English varied greatly. It was either taught as a subject or used as a medium of education or a weapon against the Arabic language and Islam. In other words, it was employed to disrupt the smooth linguistic and cultural development of North of Sudan in

general and the South in particular. The following evaluation would reveal the aims and functions of ELT and expose their sinister role during the colonial rule.

Aims of ELT in the North: Implications

In fact, the aims and objectives of teaching the English language in Sudan were part and parcel of the economic, cultural, linguistic and imperialistic motives of the colonial political apparatus erected in Sudan. The implantation of English in Sudan was one of their main objectives. After occupying Sudan, the colonial forces found that it was not possible to recruit a large number of Britishers for the purpose of administering it. Therefore, they embarked upon a plan to qualify some Sudanese to undertake the same task. They started offering education that enables few Sudanese to learn the alien language and occupy subordinate vacancies in the administration of the country. The colonial rule was not aiming at a large-scale education that may really benefit the Sudanese. In fact, Cromer, the colonial ruler of Egypt, was not in favour of launching a massive educational program in Sudan. His narrow motives are clear from his statement: "What is now mainly required is to impart such a knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic to a certain number of young men as will enable them to occupy.....the subordinate places in the administration..."² The term 'certain number' in the above statement clearly indicates that colonialism was not keen on offering massive

education to the Sudanese. Their motive to select and educate some sons of leading Sudanese men was coinciding with their plan to exploit the resources of the country and to leave behind them a class of people who were nourished by Western culture and capable of maintaining, sincerely, the colonial heritage and the colonial legacy. In other words, displacing the Sudanese culturally and linguistically was always one of the vicious motives of the colonial forces. Therefore, Cromer launched a meager and cautious project of education which was loaded by his ulterior motives.

Cromer's meager educational plan was echoed again in the appeal issued by Kitchener, the head of the colonial invading army, to erect a college in Khartoum. The purpose of the college was to commemorate the British General, Charles Gordon who was militarily defeated and physically annihilated by the Islamic patriot, Mohammed Ahmed Elmahadi and his fellow Mujahideen in 1885. As early as 1898, Kitchener explained the nature of the plan of colonial education by stating, "Certain questions will naturally arise as whom exactly we should educate, and as the nature of education to be given. Our system would need to be gradually built up. We should begin by teaching the sons of leading men,...The teaching...would be devoted to purely elementary subjects such as reading, writing geography and the English language....The principal teacherswould be British."³ Thus, the aims of teaching English during the

colonial period were based on the spirit of the above official statements which aimed at a planned linguistic and cultural transformation of the Sudanese and a parasitic exploitation of their natural resources.

In fact, the colonial rule was not only reluctant to give the Sudanese useful education, but it was also hesitant to teach the English language to the Sudanese who were, as they are still, religious by nature. The colonial rulers continued to suspect the unexpected consequences of teaching English to the Sudanese. The colonial forces were afraid that if a large number of people, from such a religious background, master the English language, they might use it in confronting the colonial motives which were over-riding the Europeans. In other words, the colonial government felt that English language would be a powerful means for the enlightened Sudanese to counteract the colonial conspiracies and propagate his own Islamic ideology and convictions. Cromer has gone to the extent of admitting that the introduction of teaching the English language into Sudan might 'furnish the subject races with a very powerful arm against their alien races.'⁴ Cromer went on delivering his misguiding directives which exposed the narrow and selective nature of his educational set-up that aimed at strengthening, systematically, the linguistic hegemony of English over the Sudanese intelligentsia. Although the English language was initially considered a means of facilitating the works of the colonial forces in Sudan, however, it was considered

by Cromer to be a generator of unexpected and unwanted situations which could trouble the colonial presence in Sudan. Addressing his colonial officials, Cromer frankly stated, "As a matter of fact....for one political difficulty you resolve by the teaching of English you create a dozen."⁵ He emphasized on erecting a few schools to achieve his colonial agenda. He preferred that schools for the purpose of teaching English 'should be few.'⁶ He aimed at limiting the number of the learners of English and limiting its use only within the exploitative administrative establishment. He stated, "At present only those boys should learn English who are subsequently going to make use of it in the government service or in commercial pursuits in which such a knowledge is necessary."⁷ At the same time, they were not even in favour of using the Arabic language in education, but they found that the use of Arabic at the initial stages was unavoidable. This was basically because the Arabic language was developing as the language of almost all the Sudanese. It was the mother tongue of the northern Sudanese and the prospering lingua-franca of the Southern tribes.

Moreover, when the colonial army invaded Sudan, it found that Sudan was having its own indigenous Islamic education embodied in Khalwa which was undertaking the task of spreading enlightenment through the medium of the Arabic language. The British colonialism, as it is the case with the attitude of the American Imperialism now towards Islamic education in many parts of the world, did not relish

the situation in which Islamic education (Khalwa) was the sole and only source of knowledge. Cromer, due to his colonial snobbery and cultural ignorance, considered Khalwa to be “nearly useless as any educational establishment could be.”⁸ Being a part of a colonial and Masonic apparatus, he utterly failed to realize the fact Khalwa was far better than the churches in which children are sexually abused by the corrupt unmarried priests. To subvert the cultural identity of the Sudanese, he initiated a colonial policy that aimed at hindering the smooth functioning of Islamic education and paving the way for the cancerous Western-type schools to provide English medium education for the Sudanese.

On the other hand, other colonial administrators were keen on spreading the English language in Sudan. Kitchener’s statement that ‘The principal teachers...would be British’ indicates that colonialism was nursing hidden and undeclared agenda because the employment of British teachers entails the imposition of English as a medium of instruction and this shows that their motive went beyond the mere employment of the educational output in the colonial administration. Such contrary notions indicate that the colonial rule after invading Sudan, sustained hope, entertained fear and lived with contradictions as well as confusion with regard to the educational motives in general and language policy in particular. The motive of making English to play an integrative function in Sudan was a basic aim. Such a motive seemed to have been based

on, and coinciding with, the cunning cultural and linguistic philosophy of Douglas Dunlop, a colonial teacher and educational inspector in Egypt. D. Dunlop advocated the early use of English as a medium of instruction of education to enable it, as he wished to “form as largely as may be possible the living vehicle of thought and expression.”⁹ It means that by imposing an alien language as a *vehicle of thought*, they aimed at damaging the linguistic and intellectual identity of the target learner and encroaching upon his cultural identity. For achieving such ulterior motives, they made English the most essential subject in the colonial education.

The English language was not only an important subject at the Primary level, (the 2nd stage that follows the Elementary level and precedes the Secondary level), but it was also the medium of instruction at the Secondary level onward to the Higher education; Gordon College. However, many factors helped in giving the English language a foot-step in Sudan and aiding the attempts of its teaching/learning. First, English served as a test for recruitment to the civil services; the government job which was something new for the Sudanese. It was considered a pass-token to better-paid employment in the colonial administrative apparatus and the knowledge of English language was a pre-requisite to get a job in the colonial administrative establishment as well as to proceed ahead for higher education. Secondly, the presence of colonial personnel gave the Sudanese ample

chances of situational exposure to the English language and hence more possibilities of *acquiring* various skills of English language. Thirdly, the English language in education was be-all and end-all. On the one hand, there was a case of almost total immersion teaching at the Secondary level with the exception of Arabic and Islamic studies. On the other hand, the educational facilities were very meager and highly selective as well. Moreover, some students learned English quickly because the average intelligence of those who were studying at the Secondary level of that time was higher even than of those who are graduating from higher education today. In an educational system which turned to be considered the gateway to government jobs and material gain and progress, the English language became an attractive object for some learners. Those who were possessing aptitude and motivation to learn English were not only learning it, but they also mastered it. In fact, so much time and energies were consumed and wasted in teaching and learning the English language to such an extent that education appeared to be established solely for learning a foreign language. Explaining the hegemonic position of the English language in education, Eltigani, a Sudanese educator, says, "English was given preference for it was accorded more prominence in that failure in performance in English meant depriving one of pass in the final exam in the different stages."¹⁰ Eltigani went on describing the attitudes of the Sudanese towards those learners who

mastered the English language by saying, “Those who spoke it fluently and wrote it efficiently were envied by others who called them ‘Black Englishmen.’”¹¹ Those who were spiritually evacuated by the secular colonial education were corrupted by it. This situation enhanced the hegemonic and colonial nature of English and made it the only passage or corridor for English medium higher education. Consequently, the demand to learn it and to undergo the process of Western education has been, cunningly, highlighted and decorated. Due to the imperialistic status of the English language in a secular Western education the learner’s original culture used to get submerged to such an extent that turned them into ‘Anglo-Philes’. Such learners, as a result of their overwhelming and unprotected exposure to the English language and Western culture, opted to ‘migrate to another culture’ and adopt an alien identity or what Byram M. calls it ‘otherness.’¹² However, by the end of the first half of the twenties century, few learners learnt English and the general standard of English in education was not up to the mark despite the declared aims and undeclared motives.

After the departure of the colonial army, North of Sudan plunged into an era of vagueness or even absence of any definite aim behind teaching the English language although it remained, for a considerable time, the medium of instruction in higher education and as a strong compulsory subject in the lower level. The maintenance

of the hegemonic role of English became the sole and basic concern of the colonial minded rulers and educators who were running the country according to the colonial heritage and legacy. Consequently, they relegated the real higher aims of education to the margin. The English language became education in itself and the implication is that for almost one century Sudan has suffered from the Westernization of the Sudanese intelligentsia. The English language became an unbearable burden on the Sudanese education rather than a boon. Learners could neither master it nor could they get rid of it. Consequently, the entire nation became a mere consumer of the hollow ethics and stray values of the West and its material products. As a result of the domination of the English language over the higher education, Sudan has not witnessed any original intellectual renaissance or scientific breakthrough.

Aims of ELT in the South: Implications

As far as the South is concerned, English was essentially geared by the colonial forces to displace the southerners culturally and linguistically. The aims and objectives of, both, education and teaching English in the South were having dimensions others than being merely educating the southerners. Unlike the North, education in the South was not undertaken by the central colonial administration. It was left, entirely, to the Christian missionary societies to undertake the task of disfiguring

and spoiling the indigenous cultural and linguistic map of the South. They employed, both, colonial education and the English language for segregating the South of Sudan from the North. It means that, in the South, education in general and English language teaching in particular were based on colonial ulterior motives. They aimed at hindering the spread of the light of Islam in the dark continent. They were keen on depriving the Africans in general and the southern part of Sudan in particular from the enlightened influence of Islam and its glorious teachings and then creating 'a chain of Christian stations across the whole of Central Africa extending from Nigeria to Ethiopia.'¹³

The South was suffering from the diversity of local vernaculars, however, Arabic language always remained a link language of the region throughout the history. The colonial forces tried to exploit the diverse linguistic map of the southern region. They desperately tried to limit the spread of the Arabic language and impose the English language. The malicious motive behind the imposition of English in the South can be inferred from colonial opinion which considered that "English would give the Christian missionary some slight chance over the overwhelming advantage which Islam seems to have at present in the Southern Sudan."¹⁴ In other words, they relied upon English to enforce their sinister colonial agenda. Therefore, the English language was introduced into, and imposed on, the South, mainly, as a weapon against the

Arabic language and Islam rather than a means of education. Nevertheless, both, the war which was launched against the Arabic language and the support which was provided for the English language in the South, proved to be a failure. It appears that the colonial forces were trying to confront social, linguistic, cultural, ideological and historical realities which were strong and well-planted in the Sudanese soil. Unfortunately, the colonial rule could not perceive them. They could not realize that it is absurd to think of making English the lingua-franca of the South. The failure of English to act as the lingua-franca of the South and the natural as well as the intuitive acceptance of the Arabic language by the southerners as their mother tongue, were due to the similarity of attitudes and behaviour patterns cutting across regional and linguistic boundaries in Sudan.¹⁵ It was also a clear manifestation of the fact that English was an alien language superimposed on an indigenous society which was experiencing a vigorous development of the Arabic language as a means of communication all over the South. It made the concept of spreading of the Arabic language and its culture a tangible, unavoidable and imperative reality.¹⁶ The same society was also witnessing the smooth spread of Islam as a religion that unifies all races and colours on the bases of Godly brotherhood, a general reality about the glorious nature of Islam as admitted by Edward W. Blyden who states, "If the divinity of a religion may be inferred from the variety of races

among whom it has been diffused, and the strength of its hold upon them, then there is no religion that can prefer greater claims than Islam.”¹⁷ Edward W. Blyden goes on to admit that no other religion has, with so marked a degree, overstepped the limits of race as the religion of Islam which, as he says, “extinguished all distinctions founded upon race, color or nationality.”¹⁸

Unfortunately, in the post-colonial period, the blood sucker war-lords and the colonial-minded pseudo-politicians tried to continue perpetuating the same social, economic and educational agenda of the colonial system on the southern society and segregating it from the North. The question of imposing English as the lingua-franca of the South, in spite of its failure during colonialism, has occupied their filthy, empty and ruined minds. English language was manipulated to legitimize the power and status of the corrupt and colonial-minded warmongers and stupid pseudo-politicians and achieve narrow personal, political and social ends. The imposition of English on the South has played a crucial role in the perpetuation of the political hegemony of the Western-minded politicians and educated elite and the consolidation of the intellectual poverty of the common southerners. The attempt to continue imposing English as the lingua-franca of the South after the departure of the colonial army, has contributed to strengthening the imperialistic position of English in the South and weakening the educational process of the common man.

Moreover, the reinstating of English, by the Peace Accord in 1972, as the 'principal language' of the South was a colonial behaviour of those who take an 'either-or' position in a linear scale. It was a wishful thinking and a muddled planning which was a result of a foreign dictate. It was a desperate politics of institutionalization of English education and was part of defeatist attitudes nursed by the colonial-minded politicians. It seemed that they were having their own vested interest in continuing the perpetuation of the colonial policy in order to control the political apparatus which served their domination, legitimated their hegemony and hence appeased their colonial masters. By sticking to such colonial heritages, they tried to educate their children in English medium education, keep the masses illiterate and prevent the equal redistribution of knowledge and power among the southerners. They continued also to isolate the Arabic language which is a major language in the South and spoken, as well, by almost all the southerners. They prevented the normal returning of the southerners to, and the interaction with, the indigenous surrounding and consequently they heightened the sense of linguistic deprivation which the common man in the South feels due to the imposition of English upon them.

Even after the separation of the South and the formation of the Southern Sudan State, the Southern warmongers and pseudo-politicians must realize that so long as they insist on retaining English as the lingua-

franca and the medium of education in the South, there will be little hope for educational and intellectual regeneration of the southerners. They must remember that any attempt to re-impose English on the Southerners will mean imposing ignorance and backwardness on them. They should realize that European languages did nothing good to Africans except damaging their identity, driving them towards intellectual migration and queuing them in the line of physical migration to Europe, nevertheless, Europe does not welcome them. If the Southern politicians are seriously interested in educating the southerners and communicating with them, the only common language available to them, understood by the common southerners and capable of enhancing literacy, advanced education and intellectual awareness, is the Arabic language. But if they are aiming at displaying their social snobbery, false educational status and alien linguistic allegiance, they may resort to English and they would never be in touch or in harmony with their common people. However, they must keep in mind that the reckless policy of imposing the English language upon the common man would alienate and prevent him from participating in government activities and programmes and thus legitimating the hegemony of colonial-minded politicians over the political apparatus and depriving the son of the common man from climbing it up. Therefore, the masses in the southerners must be aware that there is a plot to detach them from the common stream of the

Sudanese culture which is near and dear to them. The plot aims to deprive them from the culture that aims at fostering moral and cultural awareness and social cohesion. Moreover, the Southerners should be aware that there is a plot to deprive them from truly competitive education which is the right of everyone in the South and not only confined to the sons of the stupid pseudo-politicians and warmongers who are being educated abroad so that they may come back and colonize their own ignorant people.

However, it can't be denied that some southern educators were aware of the negative implications of imposing English on the Southerners and the marginalization of the Arabic language. They were rational and practical in their attitude towards the aims and objectives of English language teaching/learning in the South. They favoured the Arabic language and considered it the natural medium of education. In fact, such educators were in touch with reality more than those war-lords. Now, the South is no more an isolated geographical entity. Even after the establishment of the State of Southern Sudan, it is still in close link with Sudan culturally, linguistically, economically and geographically. The civil war in the Southern Sudan which was instigated by the same pseudo-politicians and warmongers who drove the Southerners towards separation proved this fact. The Southerners found the Sudan a safe haven to them. Therefore, the question of the spread of the Arabic

language in the Southern Sudan and its use as a medium of communication and education is not only important, but also imperative and unavoidable.

The initiative taken by the moron military Junta of 1989 and their hypocrite Islamists supporters in Sudan to declare the replacement of English by Arabic as a medium of education was a reaction against the linguistic hegemony and the cultural loot imposed and exercised by English medium education. It was a slap on the colonial-minded educators, politicians and administrators who aimed at continuing hatching the English medium education that lowered the educational output, metamorphosed the linguistic and intellectual identity of the future generations and produced wastage only. At the same time, it was also a spontaneous response to the appeal of many sincere and unprejudiced educators, in the North and the South, to rescue the educational quality in general and the Sudanese learners in particular.

Though it became clear now that the Arabicization policy of higher education was declared, by moron military rulers and their hypocrite so called Islamist supporters, for political gain only and not for actual implementation, but we must remember that the question of switch-over from English to the Arabic language, in the higher education, is most crucial to the cultural, intellectual and linguistic renaissance of Sudan.¹⁹ Ultimately, however, the English language, as a medium of instruction, has to quit the stage and disappear from the

Sudanese educational scene for good. The Arabic language has to take its natural role in the educational life of the Sudanese.

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The Changing Status of ELT: A Critical Study

During the colonial rule, the colonialists were primarily concerned with strengthening their imperialistic and cultural fist over the educated Sudanese so as to serve the colonial imperial stronghold over the cultural identity of Sudan. They did not only bring the English language, but also introduced and used foreign examination barometers and yardsticks to measure the educational and language achievements of the Sudanese learners. The colonial educational and administrative systems were geared to accomplish such vicious conspiracies and English was one of the main tools for achieving them. The English language gradually started acquiring a hegemonic position in education and administration. The erection of English medium higher education, the increasing number of colonial personnel and the fevered evangelization in the South, all these factors, gave the English language a status that made it an imposed language for the Sudanese. Very few learners could master it although it was the medium of higher Secondary and college education, administration and even lower education in the South. At then, English was considered and taught, as well, in Sudan as the first or the second language though it was not in fact so. The material used for ELT in Sudan depended on the type of courses

used in the British schools and overseas colonial educational establishments. The ELT material of the early period of colonialism focused mainly on:

1. content and imagination in composition,
2. the study of classical English literature,
3. the acquiring of secondary language skills, precise, paraphrasing, reading aloud, etc.,
4. the study of semi-philosophical grammar.¹

It is clear that the content of ELT, as indicated in the above list, was suitable for learners whose mother tongue or first language was English. In other words, it appears that English language used to be taught in Sudan as if it were the first language of the Sudanese. Since the colonial administration was run by the interaction between the Sudanese civil servants and the colonial personnel, the English language was taught on the basis of Grammar Translation method. This was basically because the colonial educator was keen on developing the learner's translation and interpreting skill. This method of teaching occupied the teaching activity for a considerable period.

The colonial rule wanted to make English play a wider role and it felt that its method of teaching should be modernized and that it should not be confined to Grammar Translation Method. The changing fashion of ELT theories during the first half of the 20th century aimed at universalizing the spoken English. Therefore, Direct Method was one of those emerging theories. It was

introduced into Sudan in the 1930s. Though English was used as the medium of instruction in higher education and as a strong tool to divide the country, it failed to find actual strong position among the Sudanese. In the wake of the Sudanization and Arabicization of administration during the late 1950s and the Arabicization of Secondary education in the 1960s, English continued to occupy the role of the medium of instruction in higher education and a segregator of the southern region from the North.

After the departure of the colonial army, the status of English was undergoing dramatic and overwhelming changes due to the descending of its standard. However, it seems that the educators were not in favour of adapting to the changes because they did not know how to deal with the changing situation. The teaching material remained the same for almost thirty years after the departure of the colonial army. Minor changes were introduced into the material and methods used in the form of Aural-oral approach and Structural material. These changes imposed a formal status of English equivalent to that of a second language. A participant in the Conference 'English in Sudan', in 1966, confirmed, "Most of the books we use in our schools are designed for foreign pupils who are learning English as a second language."² This state of affairs continued without any drastic change in spite of the fact that, as early as 1937, the De La Warr Commission had suggested that "the evaluation of English as the equivalent of a foreign language should be granted to

Sudanese candidates.”³

The same situation continued without any significant change during the 1970s. In 1975 the report of the English Department in Bakht el Ruda Institute of Teachers’ Training said, “The syllabus of English which is operating now is the same old syllabus which was introduced in the 1950s.”⁴ The course of ELT witnessed a major change only during 1980-83 when an integrated communicative teaching material (The Nile Course) was launched for all the six years; (General Secondary and Higher Secondary levels). Again, a new course called (The Spine) was initiated in 1990s. All were claiming to be adopting the so-called Communicative Language Teaching Approach. In other words, ELT courses, at the school level, claiming to be following the so-called Communicative Language Teaching Approach.

At present, much water has passed under the Sudanese political, social and educational bridges since the departure of the colonial army in 1956. The country witnessed great changes in its social, political, linguistic and cultural life. The English language and its teaching/learning have been arrested in the turbulence of these overwhelming changes. The English language teaching situation has also undergone a drastic change. Nevertheless, its policies and objectives are not free from contradictions. In government schools while, officially, English is regarded as a foreign language, educationally, it is only a compulsory subject taught for students whose

ages range between 10 and 12. In other words, teaching English starts from class fifth Basic level and it continues up to the 8th class of the same level throughout the Secondary level. Moreover, failure in English in the S. S.C., at present, does not mean failure in the S. S. C. examination as it was in the past. Even literature paper which was a compulsory paper for 3rd year students Secondary School, Arts stream, has become an optional paper. The current ELT program aspires for 'communicative competence'. Ironically, it assigns English the status of, both, a 'foreign language' and a 'library language'. It seems the designers of the syllabus do not know that 'communicative competence' can't be achieved in a 'foreign language' and a 'library language' situation. It seems also that they just utter these terminologies without know their meanings or implications. At the same time the overall aim of the school curricula, as stated by the Committee of Educational Reform formed in 1991, is to make students, "learn one or more foreign languages to a level that it can help in acquiring scientific and humanistic knowledge."⁵ It means that it assigns an academic status to the English language. In the higher education, apart from being the medium of instruction in some universities in disciplines such as medicine, engineering and pharmacy, the English language is studied also in Departments of Arts, Linguistics and in Teachers' Education Faculties. According to the declared 'Arabicization policy',

universities and higher educational institutions are supposed to switch over to the Arabic language as a medium. Even in the higher educational institutions which are, relentlessly, insisting to continue the instruction in English, the students' poor achievement in English will force these educational establishments, in the near future, to use Arabic as a medium of instruction if they are really keen on achieving an acceptable standard of their educational effort. In fact, they have to switch over to the Arabic language if they are serious about the final academic output, otherwise, they will produce educational wastage who has an academic Degree.

As it is clear from the above background, the focus of ELT courses and the role of the English language in the Sudanese educational system have not been adjusted according to the actual need of the Sudanese which was shifting over the years. The above discussion shows, clearly, that the status of the English language in Sudan has not yet been clarified by the educators and language policy planners. There is a clear absence of precise aims and objectives of ELT. There is no proper and clear perception of the aims and priorities of ELT. There are apparent contradictions ingrained in the objectives of the new ELT program itself. Consequently, educators and language policy planners failed to design a course that may fulfill a purposeful academic task. The school level objectives, whether general or specific, are loaded with contradictions and stated rather vaguely in terms of

linguistic skills. The instructional objectives of the Basic level syllabus states that at the end of this level the pupils are expected to acquire the following skills:

1. *Listening and speaking:*

(A) To enable the learner to listen and understand dialogues whether recorded or oral and to participate in similar situations as a listener or speaker.

(B) To enable the learner to acquire the appropriate language functions at a reasonable degree so as to express himself in English.

2. *Reading:*

To develop the reading skills and strategies in the learner so that he can interact as a good reader with simple texts such as essays, stories and selected supplementary readers. This will enable the learner to move to the horizons of 'free reading' which helps the learners pursue (follow) self learning and benefit from other sources of culture.

3. *Writing:*

The learner should acquire the satisfactory writing skills which enable him/her to construct accurate sentences and paragraphs which lead to write guided and free composition.⁶

Whereas, the aims at the Secondary level are:

1. To develop further the four skills acquired at the Basic level.
2. To give reading and writing more emphasis because

of their preparatory nature to any further studies and at the same time to develop self-learning abilities.

3. Since exposure to English depends upon experiencing and communicating in the language itself, the learner must be given chance to compensate for this loss by reading selected texts from the English literature.⁷

These objectives are rather ambitious in the present context of the English language situation. In other words, it can be assumed that the current ELT material used in Sudan promises more than it delivers. The above mentioned objectives which aspire for making the students learn listening, speaking, reading and writing, are phrased vaguely. It is difficult to know as to what level of language skills students are expected to achieve. It is not clear also as how a pupil of eleven or twelve years, who starts the study of English at class fifth will, according to the meaning of the term '*acquire*', be able to do so with a '*foreign*' language. It is not clarified also as to what situations in which the learner will use English. In this regard it is important to remember that the course itself has admitted the absence of actual exposure to the English language by stating, 'Since exposure to English depends on experiencing and communicating in the language itself, the learner must be given chance to compensate for this loss by reading'. Unfortunately, the course does not prescribe any purposeful supplementary

reading to compensate for the 'loss' of exposure to the English language. The books of English literature in use in Secondary level are difficult for the learner to understand unless he resorts to decipher the meaning of each and every word. It is also, difficult to know as to what level, in terms of language 'accuracy' the learner is expected to achieve in a teaching situation where there are no supplementary books of grammar exercises that enable students to practice and reinforce the structure of English.

Moreover, the current syllabus, as it claims, has been designed to help parents to assist their children in learning English. The syllabus designers, in their address to parents, state that it is also meant to be used by parents so that they can offer support to their children at home. Ironically enough, the official statistics of 1994 state that more than 72% of the Sudanese are illiterate! They can't read or write through Arabic script, then, how can they '*support their children*' at home to learn English?! It means that such objectives seem to be unrealistic in the present context of Sudan where illiteracy is reigning. This makes us suspect that the ELT material has been designed only for the children of the elite class and not for the children of the common masses all over Sudan. It seems that the role of the English language in our educational set-up is usually misunderstood and exaggerated and the courses of English are left to be designed by people who, barring a few, have no touch with local constraints and the

practical realities of learning a foreign language. Therefore, the ELT failed to be a well-planned program and teachers and learners have never found themselves involved in it.

All this indicates that the status of English and the purpose of its teaching/learning are not clearly understood. In fact, ELT in Sudan suffered because we failed to define its objectives rationally. It also shows that deciding the objectives of ELT in Sudan, writing teaching material, recommending the methods of teaching and executing the whole program of ELT/learning are little better than a game of chance. It seems that it is, mechanically, carried out by people who are, barring a few, the product of a defective higher education, evaluation and research system which generously offers Bachelor's, Master's and Ph.D. Degrees that are fabricated and achieved by hooks or crooks. All this is evident enough to show that even today we have not become aware of the changing situation of ELT and its implications. It does not appear that there is any uniform vision regarding the position of ELT at the school level. This exposes the discrepancies ingrained in the views of policy makers. There is a serious discrepancy between what the syllabus designers and policy makers aspire and what is believed and practiced inside the classroom. We have not adapted ourselves to these changes or to the realities related to them. Consequently, we could not realize the necessity of precision in defining our aims and

objectives or recruiting truly qualified cadres to phrase them. The new objectives of the ELT program are still attempting to perpetuate the same type of ELT material which could not qualify university entrants to undergo English medium disciplines. Thus, it can be assumed that what MacMillan, as early as 1970, has stated about the retention of English in Sudanese education “as much a matter of ‘habit’ as of planning”⁸, may be applicable even today.

The ambiguous objectives of ELT in Sudan, the haphazard planning and the faulty implementation of teaching materials and methods which confused issues, all this, made a poor return in learning English despite the numerous planning and re-planning. In fact, things go awry because language policy makers have been thoughtlessly transplanting imported ELT theories. The drastic shift from literature and structural material to the so-called communicative syllabus and the Arabicization in higher education, which was declared in 1990 but has not yet materialized, seems to have confused the language policy makers with regard to the status of ELT in Sudan. The language policy makers hardly seemed to be aware of how to develop or co-ordinate a program that can tame such dictated and uncontrollable changes in the ELT situation in Sudan and adopt suitable teaching material, method, etc.

Consequently, the achievement in English in schools is in a chaotic condition. Most of the teachers are

neither academically nor professionally qualified to teach English. Students are poor readers and writers. A study of the performance of the Secondary level student shows that many potential under-graduates don't have control over the simple aspects of the English language.⁹ They face difficulties in various aspects of grammar, reading and writing. They cannot write even a short sentence correctly not to say of their learning speaking skill which is a utopia. They hardly know one hundred words by the time they complete the S. S. level or join the Higher education. This means that they have hardly been able to learn words at the rate of one word per ten periods. There are no provisions for teaching aids. Examination system is grossly defective and rather unreliable. Most of secondary school Sudanese students don't know anything in English, but still they are being passed in writing examination papers of English.¹⁰ In short, the present ELT situation in Sudan is erratic, arbitrary, wayward and stray. This exposes the fact that the ELT establishment in Sudan is not on the right track. The defects of ELT can be summarized and enumerated as follows:

1. Lack of clear-cut policy,
2. Little understanding of the aims of ELT,
3. Defective teaching material,
4. Wrong methods employed in ELT,
5. Dearth of qualified teachers,
6. Defective examination system.

Special measures are required to improve its condition. In other words, this new situation urges for the revision of the aims and objectives, methods of teaching, preparation of material and teachers' training programs. Moreover, Departments of English at the university level should be reshuffled and the higher Degrees offered to the teaching staffs in these Departments should be reviewed as many researches are fabricated and the copyrights are violated and stolen in order to fabricate those researches and join teaching posts at the university level, therefore, the achievement of the Bachelor's holders is not up to the mark and many students who are enrolled for Master's Degree in English can't write a single sentence correctly. The course of the Master's itself is defective. It means that unless English Departments at the university level are reshuffled, specialized students would never get a qualified teacher to teach them and prepare them for their tasks at the school level.

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ELT in Sudan: Multi-Dimensional Measures

Any plan which purports to improve ELT in Sudan, should take multi-dimensional steps in various directions. It should provide adequate provisions important for achieving the desired outcome of teaching. In other words, better progress in ELT might be made if its teaching is supported by various provisions such as clear-cut policies that enhance the teacher's and the learner's understanding of aims and objectives, academically and professionally qualified teachers, availability of suitable textbooks, adoption of suitable method of teaching, providing Teacher's Handbook and various teaching aids and equipment necessary for the successful performance of ELT course and setting up an effective examination system that does not cheat the students, parents and educational set-up and produce fabricated results. The extent of the availability of these provisions contributes to the effectiveness of teaching/learning and affects the outcome of whatever teaching is done.

In order to improve the ELT in Sudan and create a better learning output, we have to analyze, critically, some of its various aspects and take multi-dimensional initiatives that may increase our awareness of the problems involved and provide us with necessary measures which may help us to overcome them. The following are some

measures which may contribute to the efficiency of the process of English language teaching/learning.

Defining the Status of ELT in Sudan:

The inability of the language policy makers to take any positive step towards defining, clearly, the status and the role of the English language in Sudan or designing a suitable ELT course, was due to the fact that the place of ELT in Sudan has been subject to debate and a source of contradictory and conflicting opinions ever since the departure of the colonial army. When the British army departed from Sudan in 1956, there was a natural reaction against the study of English and its hegemonic position in the Sudanese education. Yet some people called to banish English from Sudan lock, stock and barrel. Some others, blindly, called for adhering to English not only as a subject, but also as a medium of higher education. Some others called it by terms such as foreign language, second language, etc. The school curriculum implemented in 1991 considered English a "*foreign language*". Due to these varied and conflicting views, the study of English and its place in Sudan was, badly, affected.

However, to facilitate a deeper understanding of the process of defining the status of English in Sudan, it would not be out of place, here, to discuss the implication of the terms '*second language*', '*foreign language*', and '*library language*'. These terms are not always used to convey, precisely, the same meaning in different ELT

situations in different countries. Therefore, they are sources of confusion to the planners of language policy. The more clearly we define these terms, the better and the easier the formulation of objectives to teach English in Sudan becomes. The term '*second*' language and '*foreign*' language are sometimes used interchangeably. The British Council report for the year 1960-61 brought out this distinction:

“It has been customary to speak of teaching English as a foreign language, often merely to emphasize that the process is by no means the same as teaching it to those who already have it as their mother tongue. More recently, the term English as a second language has been employed to describe English taught or learnt for practical and necessary uses of communication....whether to serve as the language of instruction in education, or as a lingua franca among those to whom English is an acquired tongue. The distinction is important: for example, English in France or Germany is still largely learnt for those reasons comparable to those for learning French or German in Britain.....as a human discipline, and as an introduction to a foreign culture. In many countries, however, the place of English in education may be more important and indeed more fundamentally necessary, because it is either the medium of education itself or a necessary link with resources beyond the borders of the country where it

is learnt. When it is used as a second language, English is not necessarily the vehicle of distinctively British or American cultural values. It may well be the means of expressing those of the country where it has been adopted.”¹

Thus, a second language and a foreign language do not occupy the same status or play the same role in the affairs of the life of a country. In fact, the term ‘*second language*’ refers to a language which plays a major role, enjoys a wider use and occupies a more important status than the term ‘*foreign language*’ implies. Kshinka Bose distinguished between the terms ‘*second language*’ and ‘*foreign language*’ by stating, “The latter was in greater use in the past whereas the former term has gained currency in the last decades. A foreign language is a non-native language learnt within a country (may be) but used generally with reference to a speech community outside national/territorial boundaries, whereas the second language is a non-native to the speaker who learns it within the country and who shows that the language L₂ has a recognized function within the country. In such a case, it virtually has an official status which a foreign language does not have.”² However, in this regard, the definition offered by V. V. Yardi may be more apt and suitable with ELT situation in Sudan. V. V. Yardi says that the term ‘foreign language’ refers to “a situation where it is taught for certain specific purpose viz: reading scientific

works, translation, communication at certain levels for certain purposes only. English as a second language refers to a situation where English is used widely for purposes of administration, education and as a common link language.”³

Depending on the above discussion, we can say that the English language, in Sudan, may be considered a ‘foreign language’ which has some academic purposes. Its academic significance is implied in the fact that it is mostly used for certain ‘very specific purposes’ such as reading scientific works, translation and communication at certain limited levels and for certain limited purposes. All these activities are carried out, mostly and only, at certain limited educational and academic specialization e.g. medicine, engineering, etc., of higher education. Therefore, functionally, practically and more specifically, English can be called a ‘*library language*’ rather than a ‘*foreign language*’. However, still English must be considered a foreign language also. In fact, there is a close relationship between the term ‘*foreign language*’ and the term ‘*library language*’. In the words of V.V. Yardi, “‘a library language’ tends to acquire the status of a foreign language.”⁴ Handling the functioning of English as library language in education, K. Bose says that English as a library language implies the use of the English language “primarily in specialized branches of study.”⁵ However, this close relationship between the term ‘*foreign language*’ and ‘*library language*’ doesn’t

mean that the teaching material embodying them must be the same.

Although the academic role of English, in the wake of the declared Arabicization, is diminishing, it must be noted that the English language in Sudan has not yet descended to the same level of foreign languages like German, French, etc., which are taught for very few students, in specialized Departments of higher education. In a worldwide survey on the foreign language learners' goal conducted in 1978, Wilga M. Rivers found that in Sudan English is only the medium of instruction at the university, but it has no role outside the university.⁶ The current ELT program itself refers to this fact by saying that since exposure to English depends on experiencing and communicating in the language, the learner must be given chance to compensate for this by reading. It means that the English language, like other foreign languages, has no legal status in Sudan. Nevertheless, nobody can deny the fact that English enjoys the advantage of being the most important foreign language. This is clear from the fact that the aims of the educational system give more importance to foreign languages teaching and recommend that students should study one or more foreign languages and in almost all the cases this foreign language is English. Now, it can be said that the English language is only a compulsory foreign language.

Defining the Objectives of ELT in Sudan:

In teaching a foreign language it would be more pertinent to know exactly the ultimate aim of its teaching. We ought to consider carefully what we are trying to achieve when we are teaching a foreign language. It is important to remember that objectives which do not consider the changing situations and do not cater to the immediate needs are bound to be a mirage. When designing ELT materials, it is important to be realistic about phrasing aims and objectives precisely. If this is clearly perceived and properly planned, then the shortest way of reaching the target destination would be paved evenly. It means that without explicitly defined aims and objectives, all those who are involved in the process of teaching/learning will fail to know the points of its strength and weakness and whether the system is working or not. Without a proper knowledge of these aims and objectives the teacher will not be able to organize the teaching/learning activities and learners will find no interest or motivation to learn English language. We must remember that when language policy makers and syllabus designers fail to lay down clear objectives of ELT, then the other aspects of ELT such as methods, approaches, pedagogical activities, tests, evaluation and teachers' selection, training and preparation, all, become aimless and haphazard because all these are so closely linked that none can exist without the other. ELT in Sudan would have not suffered or been disturbed if its teaching/learning

objectives and purposes had been clearly defined and understood in such a way as to make teachers and learners aware of what they are doing and what they are striving to achieve. ELT program in a foreign language teaching situation, like Sudan, is better to the extent that it identifies and articulates the aims and content of the program it is going to adopt, as clearly as possible, and sorts out its priority on a rational basis. Therefore, the only way to salvage ELT in Sudan is to lay down perceivable, foreseeable and applicable aims and objectives and to endeavour, diligently, to achieve them. A mere statement of ambitious aims, which are more or less utopian rather than real, will not be fruitful. The reform in ELT ought to begin first by stating unambiguously its aims and objectives because they are the infrastructure on which any sound teaching/learning is based. Many scholars have dealt with aims of learning a foreign language. For example, in the words of Kabakchy, V. V., "There is a twofold aim in learning a foreign language. Firstly, it provides access to the information produced in these tongues....The other aim is, however, any nation which wants to be known outside its boundaries...faces the inevitable task of interpreting its culture in terms of 'foreign' language."⁷ However, to my mind, within the Sudanese context, English language teaching must be analyzed more closely and critically with reference to: (1) The national needs English may serve in the new educational set-up. (2) The variables involved in our teaching/learning situation. (3)

The teaching materials and the methods suitable with our educational context. (4) The academic as well as the professional qualifications of the teachers of English and the extent of the teachers' command over the English language. (5) The age at which learning of English should start. (6) The learner; what he needs to do with the foreign language, the situation in which he is expected to use it, his learning strategies, the difficulties he encounters and the extent of their motivation towards learning English. (7) The possibility and feasibility of providing the learner with sufficient *formal* exposure to the target language. (8) What are the language items the learners can master within a specific span of time.

All this needs to be closely considered. Syllabus designers have to lay down clear English language policy which would help in planning and executing a suitable ELT material and teaching method and avoid the negative implications of the imported methods and approaches on the learner's achievement, his learning strategy and culture as well. It is important to understand the implications of importing and implementing foreign language teaching/learning approaches and methods.

Communicative Approach: A Blessing or a Wrath

The Communicative Approach appeared as a revolution in the field of teaching methodology. Language teachers in many teaching situations considered it an emerging blessing. They abolished old methods and

resorted to adopt Communicative Approach in teaching second/foreign languages. However, to my mind, in a foreign language situation like Sudan, the whole-sale change in methodology, approach and content of teaching English has upset the established and well tried patterns and practices of language teaching/learning and failed to help the teachers who were rooted in the traditions of structural approach to cope with such a shift. The shift was loaded with confusion both at the stage of planning and execution. It turned the whole process of teaching/learning into fragmented practices that cannot fit anywhere into language teaching/learning establishment. Therefore, the current syllabus nurses many hopes, but it could not realize any because it did not specify or lay down the suitable method nor did it outline the feasibility of its own successful implementation. In fact, it can be assumed that there is no particular method around which the current syllabus is developed. It targeted the unattainable spoken fluency and failed to enhance the system of communication which is the main aim of the common learners and the most attainable skill. In other words, it sets itself for the utopian and failed to foresee or achieve the possible. It advocated communicative competence, avoided providing systematic approach to grammar and failed to enhance or test the productive skill of the learner, namely, the spoken skill which it strives for. It means that it contradicted the spirit of the method it had advocated and, ironically, resorted to test the formal

system of the language which it had tried to avoid. It means that there is a clear mismatch between the advocated material for teaching/learning and the material tested and evaluated. It wished to develop communicative competence, but failed to adopt a suitable principle of selection, gradation and presentation of language items. As it advances, it concentrated more on presenting, rapidly, an expanding material rather than selecting, grading, presenting, recycling and reinforcing the language items to help the average learner. Thus, there is a clear surrender to a type of material produced by brain storming of half-qualified syllabus designers. Therefore, in the Sudanese context, Communicative Approach is a wrath rather than a blessing. It is loaded with negative implications which can be discussed, further, as follows:

Implications on the Learning Strategies:

Some critics claim that when Grammar Translation Method was in vogue, there was no tangible progress in actual learning of the language. But such a claim has no strong foundation to stand on. In fact, in the past, some students gained command over reading comprehension and correct expression whether written or spoken. This was not so much because they knew the rules of grammar in which no doubt they were better, but also because teachers spoke in English and English was the medium of all subjects with exception of Arabic and Islamic Studies. It was the exposure to language in an

immersion teaching situation that helped them to learn English.

Moreover, language policy planners must remember that communicative language behaviour or overall language skill can't be obtained through memorizing unused phrases whose meaning and structures have not been perceived by students. It is important to keep in mind that when Grammar Translation Method was in vogue, there was a great ability to manipulate the core of the language (syntax + vocabulary). Therefore, communicative skill used to grow from the learners' internalized language stock. Learners used to adopt their own learning strategies to gain control over various aspects of the language. In fact, learners' activity centered round conscious and analytical study of grammar, memorization of various items of the language and constructing novel sentences on the basis of both. The rules of grammar also prescribed a norm to which they could refer when in doubt. That generation which adopted its own learning strategies has disappeared since a long time and one now meets the individuals who are left without being offered any guidance or self-access material.

In other words, in their attempt to go communicative, the syllabus designers did not give any consideration to the strategies and learning styles of the learner. The so-called communicative syllabus demolished the well-established strategies of learning English which were effective with many learners who have aptitudes and

motivation to learn English and made the learning style without any methodological reference. Consequently, the emphasis on the so-called communicative syllabus made the Sudanese learner lose control over the systematic cognitive learning process which was, and will always remain, the most effective learning strategy for learners in foreign language learning situation like Sudan.

We must remember that foreign language learners exhibit a high level of systemacity in the process of learning the target language. Essentially, the Sudanese learner handles English learning according to strategies and styles of learning which are the same as those adopted by learners who had learned through M. West's Readers and Structural material which were in vogue for more than three decades. They usually search for, and hunt, un-contextualized vocabulary items and learn their meanings, spelling and pronunciation. They also concentrate on the structure of the language and engage themselves in mechanical and laborious activities in pattern practice. In fact, all the learning activities of the common Sudanese learners tend to be linguistic and intellectual rather than natural or communicative. However, the so-called communicative language material turns learning into a process of dealing with un-practical phrases that made the activity of learning a foreign language empty from any practical or intellectual significance.

Linguistic Implications:

When the educational authority opted for adopting the philosophy of Communicative Approach, they could not realize that we don't have the qualified teacher who could turn teaching activity as a creative art by starting from the communicative text and expanding the communicative activities so as to enable the student to learn and reinforce what he learns. They failed to remember that there is no linguistic environment that could compensate for the defective teaching and reinforce what is supposed to be taught. They have not yet realized the actual constraints of the local situation. In this regard, we may ask: Can a man run his best in the dark? By blind adoption of the Communicative Approach and material in initiating the teaching of English, it seems that educators are trying to challenge the dominant environment in which learners live. Educators must remember that in every teaching/learning effort, it is essential to know what one is aspiring to achieve by adopting a particular method. They must not indulge, blindly, in the labyrinth and darkness of pursuing and implementing every imported language method or approach. It is important to keep in mind that language learning is a process of habit formation strengthened by good teaching and reinforcement. Moreover, Communicative orientation syllabuses involve a second-language-like program of teachers' academic and professional preparation for the purpose of preparing highly qualified, trained and

resourceful teachers who can expand the classroom activities by their own creativity. It means that communicative language use involves a dynamic interaction among the teacher, the learner, the language activities and the context of the situation in which the use occurs. Communicative material and methodology may be effective in migrants schools in the USA or England, but not in a teaching context which doesn't provide any kind of natural exposure or real life-like situation for the learner so that he may practice and reinforce, naturally or even artificially, what he was *probably* taught in a forty-minute class by teachers who, most of them, do not possess sufficient academic and professional qualifications nor do they have any command over the basic skills of English. Therefore, departing the established traditions of English language teaching and learning, in spite of their own shortcomings, and resorting to Communicative Approach, could neither help teachers to teach effectively nor could it make learners get acquainted with the basic linguistic aspects of the English language. If we say that in Grammar-Translation Method teachers were thought of as the people who knew, thoroughly, the linguistic and literary aspects of the target language and therefore they could offer their students the core system of the language, we can't assume that in Communicative tradition teachers can speak the target language fluently so that learners may benefit from them. Therefore, we doubt their ability to benefit students by their teaching.

Communicative Approach lays more stresses on fluency than on accuracy, neglects the direct and explicit explanation of grammar and aims at making the learner internalize the grammatical rules intuitively and by means of practical interaction. However, we can't guarantee the learner a sufficient measure of exposure to the spoken English language. Consequently, if the language functions and notions do not find the actual situations to function in, then, how can it be called communicative language learning? Moreover, if grammar is not explained explicitly, the learner will never assimilate it, intuitively and inductively, from the functions and notions. This is basically because communicative functions, notions and phrases fade away from the mind of the learner without leaving any traces that can act as a reliable and useful clue for creating sensible creative meanings or forming a foundation for building further linguistic ability in the learner in future. Therefore, we may ask: How much English is heard or used outside the school or even within the educational premises so as to legitimate the imposition of the so-called communicative ELT material and method? In fact, persuading communicative competence in a foreign language teaching situation and expecting any learning output from it, is like chasing a mirage in an arid desert. In other words, the process of learning a foreign language through Communicative Approach is rather artificial because the learners will never retain the imposed phrases presented in the textbook

as they are not practiced in practical life. They may find more chances of learning grammar through reading and writing rather than through listening and speaking. Unfortunately, the present ELT course doesn't provide students with enough exposure to coherent writing nor does it offer an explicit application of the system of the language in writing. As the learner advances in the school levels, he fails to develop the cohesive devices for relating words, phrases and sentences together. He can't construct grammatically acceptable sentences nor can he incorporate punctuation. It means that the learner has failed to achieve accuracy in language discourse and at the same time he could not achieve the promised speech fluency.

Therefore, to be pragmatic, we have to revert to teaching the system of the language explicitly and design a supplementary material which gives explicit emphasis to grammar. It is important to remember that teaching grammar of English explicitly is to teach the formal rule whereas teaching it implicitly is by the presentation and practice of sentence pattern. In fact, we need a course that anchors the learner in the core of the system of the language and proceeds to prepare him for the national-cum-personal requirements. The ability to operate a common core of English words, structures and concepts, I think, is quite enough for the Sudanese learner. This means a shift or orientation from inferential to referential grammar, from implicit to explicit grammar, from

inductive to deductive grammar. At the same time, we must exert all efforts to enable the learner to internalize grammar not only as a formal system, but also as a source for use in writing and an aid in comprehending the written material. Mastering reading and writing skills, which are recommended and emphasized in this book, requires the command over the meaning and the execution of the formal aspects of English. Unless the student perceives the system of the language, masters the meaning of its vocabulary items and understands how to manage constructing similar coherent discourse, and unless a degree of attention is paid, not only to reading comprehension, but also to structural consideration, the whole process of teaching/learning a foreign language will be a futile effort that goes with the wind.

Moreover, resorting to Communicative Approach deprived the learner from the advantages of vocabulary expansion which was ingrained in the past structural courses. When the structural syllabus was in vogue in Sudan, the learner used to internalize not only grammar, but also the meaning of a large number of vocabulary items. Though most of what he learns remained folded in the receptive domain of his mind, but he used to have the ability of unfolding it and producing novel written and spoken utterances when the situation arises. Unfortunately, by adopting communicative syllabus in a foreign language situation we minimize the learner's stock of even passive vocabulary while the few active vocabulary

items which are scattered in the 'functional categories' are being condemned to remain in the passive domain of the learner's mind. Consequently, the learner's potentiality to learn and comprehend the target language is crippled rather than freed. The learner, as he proceeds to higher education, finds himself poor in the skill of reading comprehension. Therefore, designing a course that helps the learner accumulating useful vocabulary items is not only important, but also imperative. But the course must pay attention to the principles of selection, gradation, presentation, recycling and reinforcement of the vocabulary items in order to facilitate the process of learning them.

Cultural Implications:

As far as the cultural implications are concerned, we should not just wade with waders and rely very much on new theories of teaching English which change continuously. In selecting suitable method in order to implement and achieve a successful ELT program, we have to consider the peculiarity of our own socio-cultural context. In other words, the method of teaching applied must take into account the cultural variables involved in teaching/learning English. Unfortunately, the syllabus designers in Sudan fall prey to confusion caused by numerous contradictory teaching methods which appear from time to time.⁸ The apparent glamour of the theory of Communicative Approach

blinded the language policy makers and consequently they, hurriedly, introduced 'The Nile Course'. It is this abrupt introduction of the concept of the so-called Communicative Approach which has affected, negatively, the ELT and learning in Sudan. It dragged out the last soul which was still remaining in the body of ELT/learning in Sudan. In fact, throughout the history of ELT in Sudan, priority of teaching courses has been changing according to the major *fashion* of ELT theories taking place in Europe and not according to the needs of the Sudanese context. This is clear from the fact that at the beginning of the 20th century, courses of ELT were based on grammar/translation material and method. Then, syllabus designers introduced Palmer's Direct Method. This gave way to, or in other words, collaborated with, West's Reader Series and finally to the so-called functional/communicative courses. Educators imported the syllabuses which were loaded with the gutters of Western cultures. Course designers failed to perceive or realize the peculiarity of the Sudanese cultural matrix. In other words, it seems that the ELT planners in Sudan are always influenced by what Hans Dua has rightly described as "commonsense notions."⁹ They are, excessively, responsive to every theory that makes, in the words of Michael Swan, "exaggerated claims for power and novelty of its doctrine"¹⁰, but they are unaware of the fact that it may not be suitable in our cultural context.

Syllabus designers should remember that the type

of teaching material and the method of its teaching are always closely related to, and interrelated with, the teaching environment. We have to be aware of our own cultural peculiarity and evolve our own teaching method with reference to the peculiarity of our socio-cultural situation. Commenting on the peculiarity of each teaching situation and its relation with its own culture, Kennedy Chris says, "Views held on theories of language teaching and learning and views on....what happens or should happen in classrooms between teacher and students are ultimately context-specific and derived from the culture and society in which the learning takes place."¹¹

It is important to remember that the so-called communicative functions, as H. G. Widdowson described, are "cultural specific"¹². Therefore, the teaching of communicative functions, in the words of H. G. Widdowson, involves "the teaching of cultural values."¹³ However, no nation with dignity and linguistic and cultural identity will desire to teach alien 'cultural values' in the process of teaching the language representing the alien culture. We must not be under the bondage of the alien culture ingrained in the theory of Communicative Approach. In other words, we should not allow the English language to come with its cultural influences. Since the English language in Sudan is only a subject in the whole educational curriculum that aims to create an educated Sudanese, its teaching/learning has to be in harmony with, and foster as well, the overall educational

aims. We are proud of our own way of life and we must strive to make the English language the messenger of our own culture. We may fully agree with C. J. Brumfit who asserts, "No person who is not intolerably alienated from his own environment is going to want to learn English in order to become an Englishman (or an American) to such an extent that he never uses it to express the ideology, the assumptions, the cultural basis of himself rather than of Englishmen.... We need to devise a methodology which will enable the learner to use the language, not passively in relation to situations which are imposed by motivations and ideologies not his own but actively as a product of his own needs."¹⁴ What Masayuki Sano, et al., said in the context of Japan may be quite relevant to the Sudanese context and for the majority of the Sudanese learners as well. Masayuki Sano, et al., stated, "We think that the utilitarian view of language seen in most notional/functional approaches does not fit with our English teaching objectives. For most of our learners, English is not and will not be an instrument to do something with, but one subject in the whole curriculum which aims to promote the overall development of our future citizens."¹⁵ Therefore, adopting a method that enables us to strip English from its cultural baggage and load it with our own aims of education should be the main aim of its teaching/learning efforts in Sudan.

However, the most effective tool which will enable us to do so, is to equip our learners, before and after the

introduction of a foreign language, with a vast knowledge of our own history, culture and religion. Many non-Muslim countries are keen on strengthening, in the learner, the ability to lean upon his own history when he evaluates other cultures. Strengthening the referential ideology in the learner, as early as possible, is essential for maintaining the cultural identity of the learner and enabling him to pursue the learning of a foreign language and extract what benefits him from it. Martin Hyde has rightly considered such a trend “the bedrock upon which to judge. Establishing this bedrock in students should be a cross-curriculum goal.”¹⁶

Moreover, the aim of the communicative approach is to make the learner capable of thinking in English with a correspondent relegation of the mother tongue. This is neither easy to be achieved in foreign language situation nor is it desirable for our students. Learners should possess optimum ability to think in Arabic and produce eloquent Arabic discourse. Learners must have also an optimum command over the Arabic language, its structure, vocabulary, reading and writing skills. Learners should learn how to construct their ideas in Arabic and then translate them into English. For this purpose, it is important to teach functional grammar of eloquent Arabic and not the rudiment of Arabic grammar and to allow the Arabic language to mediate in the process of teaching/learning English because it will increase our feeling for the Arabic language and outline

our understanding of English as well. Hence, the learner will retain his intellectual identity and independent thinking. A proper distinction for each language will emerge within the learner. He will come to know also about the nature of the syntax, discourse, vocabulary of both Arabic and English. In other words, Arabic should be a medium of explaining English since neither the teacher can teach, explicitly, in English nor can the learner learn the meaning of English intuitively and directly.

The conclusion is that the attempt to go fully communicative is neither possible nor will not serve us because it will involve taking many imperative measures which are beyond our means and not within our needs either. My argument in favour of adopting a method that is suitable in our own teaching/learning context aims at neither putting the clock back nor demolishing the whole process of ELT in Sudan. The preparation of ELT materials and the recommendation of teaching methods should be determined keeping in mind the changing status assigned to the English language in Sudan. We must keep in our mind that as a tool of teaching/learning, now, the use of English is becoming very limited. In fact, the decision that declared Arabic as the medium of instruction in universities, even if it has not been implemented yet, affirmed the need for the English language to serve that Arabicization itself. In the past, the English language was formally considered a language of communication, but it

was taught and learnt as a language of comprehension. Nevertheless, it was in a better position. Therefore, in evolving a suitable method of our own, we have to utilize our past experiments and devote them to serve the purpose of the present. At present also, it would be practical and pedagogically justifiable as well as feasible to concentrate on passive/receptive skills of the English language. Latest literature of various disciplines of knowledge is available mostly in English. We should have scholars who are in a position to translate the content of various materials into Arabic and make them available for learners as soon as they appear. This means that we still need the English language and therefore we have to design the most effective material and chose the most suitable method that can enhance the learner's ability to learn it. We need intensive and extensive language curricular that follows a practical method in order to promote learners' ability in reading comprehension and writing correctly and coherently. Those who are specialist learners should have intensive courses in translation so as to help in successful implementation of any program of Arabicization in future. In other words, the ability to read English is likely to be an important auxiliary skill. We have to develop in the learner a faculty for comprehending writings in English, more specifically, the ability to comprehend the written references, periodicals and books related to the subject-matter of his specialization so as to enable him to supplement the specialized knowledge.

Thus, in this way, the English language in the Sudanese educational establishment would become a subject at the lower level and a supplementary library language at the higher levels.

Teacher's Qualifications:

In spite of the importance of teaching material and the method of its teaching, we must not forget that the entire program of ELT will always depend on academically qualified teachers. It is painful to say that most of teachers of English at both the levels are, academically unqualified. This is one of the most serious variables to which the poor achievement in English can be attributed. It can be assumed that there is a chronic shortage of qualified teachers of English. In fact, the demand for education has out stripped the supply of qualified teachers creating an unavoidable damage to the educational quality in general and the standard of English in particular. At the Basic level, teachers of English are not only untrained, but also academically unqualified. They are either the products of the Secondary level or the 'commercial' products of a defective higher education, hence, they themselves are poorly educated. They are either holders of only Secondary School Certificate and have, themselves, studied English for only six years or holders of a, theatrically completed, Bachelor's Degree. As far as their knowledge of the English language is concerned, majority of the Basic level teachers are the

products of the defective courses which were a failure experiment of the so-called communicative language teaching theory rather than a final credible course for learning a foreign language. The Secondary school teachers are either not specialized in English or graduated from the defective English courses under the patronage of unqualified teachers at the university level who reached teaching posts at the university level by hooks or crooks. One can imagine the command of such teachers over the English language and how such teachers can be effective in teaching a foreign language. Moreover, they teach the English language and teach also other subjects of the curriculum. A majority of them, if not all, get neither pre-service nor do they attend any in-service training.

Moreover, a vast majority of Secondary school teachers of English are holders of Bachelor's Degrees from disciplines other than English. Teachers, who have graduated from disciplines such as law, science, history, etc., are pushed into the classroom to teach English. Many of them are appointed without being subjected to any evaluation of their academic achievements and potentialities. Therefore, it can be assumed that no implementation of teaching material or method would be successful in the hands of such teachers.

We have to remember that teachers are the main pillars on which a sound ELT program stands. The success of ELT endeavour depends on the qualification and efficiency of teachers. As far as teachers' academic qualifications are

concerned, we should not insist on following the sterile, loose and easy-going qualifying system which resorts to draft any holder of Secondary School Certificate to teach English in the Basic level and the graduate of any faculty to do this task at the Secondary level. A teacher of English at the Basic level should be a graduate and specialized in English as well. At the Secondary level, the teacher should be a holder of Master's Degree in English. Moreover, the Faculties of English language at university level should be reshuffled and those who fabricated their academic Degrees should be expelled out. Only truly qualified teachers should be appointed in these Faculties because Bachelor's, Master's and Ph.D. Degrees can be fabricated and achieved, now, by any moron and stupid climber. Otherwise, lower educational levels will continue to be fed by academically unqualified teachers who drank deep from the academic and intellectual bankruptcy of their unqualified university teachers.

Keeping-up Professionally:

The single most essential aspect of any ELT course is, in fact, the teaching faculty. Academically qualified and professionally trained teachers help implementing ambitious ELT courses. It is observable that when there is a decline in the standard of the English language, syllabus designers hurry up to change the ELT syllabus. They never become true to themselves, face the reality and examine the professional qualifications of

teachers. They could not realize that no teaching program can produce positive result without professionally trained teachers. We must remember that if the ELT course is the body, the teacher's professional qualification is the soul. Therefore, special attention must be paid to the way ELT teachers are selected and trained. We cannot invite teachers to a training course of only one week and call it a full-fledged training course. Teachers of English at both the levels should get sufficient pre-service and in-service training. Moreover, it would be more pertinent on teachers themselves to increase their teaching knowledge by reading various related books and periodicals, if available. A sound knowledge of the subject, its content, and methods of teaching are essential matters and teachers should retain a sense of proportion about them and develop a kind of on-going love with the field of their specialization. In short, an ideal teacher should possess adequate level of personal education and sufficient command over the language he is teaching. He should go on improving his academic and professional qualification throughout his career. In the words of Gilbert Highet, "Teaching is inseparable from learning. Every good teacher will learn more about his subject every year, every month, every week if possible."¹⁷ A limited number of books which teachers had come across during their academic life would not suffice. In a teaching situation like that of Sudan, a teacher who probes various related and relevant materials would develop and sustain his

knowledge and compensate for his academic and professional drawbacks. If the teacher goes on increasing his knowledge, he may develop effective ways to deal with many unfavourable teaching situations. A teacher who suffices with just a shallow knowledge in his field will never be able to deal with challenging teaching tasks.

Large Classes and the ELT:

One of the important factors that affect the achievement not only in learning English, but also in acquiring education as a whole is the number of students in the classroom. Large classes have been a common aspect of the Sudanese educational system. In a teaching situation which has six periods of English a week and in a period of forty minutes, the teacher of English cannot provide each pupil with individual attention which is the basic condition for achieving a successful implementation of the so-called communicative language teaching materials. It is important to keep in mind that learning a foreign language and making proper implementation of a foreign language learning program, both, depend on the extent of interaction between the teacher and the individual learner. But in overcrowded classes, achieving this prerequisite would be rather impossible. Teachers should find a way to divide overcrowded classes into divisions so that they may be able to pay more attention to individual learners and push them forward in their journey to learn English more easily and effectively. The educational

authorities should also take all measures to reduce the number of students in each class.

Motivation to Learn English:

Motivation is an important driving force and the corner stone that makes the individual strive for achieving his own aims. As far as the learning of a foreign language is concerned, many people possess aptitude and motivation to learn more than one language. If they are provided with sufficient and proper provision of exposure to the target language, they may excel in learning languages. However, the diminishing status of the English language had affected the general attitude of the common learner towards learning it. The dominant current attitude is the lack of motivation among the majority to learn English. This is something but natural and it took place in many countries. According to John Munby, "It has been observed that in countries where there is a change in the status of English from medium to subject, standards of English are considered, in quite number of cases, to be dropping."¹⁸ Moreover, students in Sudan might have felt that learning English is no longer essential. The scores that could have been achieved in the subject of English to attain the S.S.C, can be even compensated by a high score in another subject. In addition to that, students might have felt that English is not going to continue as a medium of instruction in higher education. In 1991, an educational report on the English language in schools lamented the

lack of motivation in the students to learn English. This means that the new situation of ELT in Sudan made the learner feel that there is no purpose behind learning English. Therefore, if the existing ELT teaching course is truly learner-centered, as it claims, it has to survey and analyze the learners' need and comply with it as well. To increase learners' motivation, we need to evolve proper aims which are suitable with the ELT situations in Sudan because motivation and aims are inseparable. We may agree with Y. C. Bhatnagar who states, "Aims and objectives of ELT must coincide with the learners' motivation, requirements and needs."¹⁹ A course of language teaching/learning should not promise more than it can deliver. Knowing the local needs and finding ways of inspiring the learners' motivation are very important. Teachers and administrators should find a way to foster and sustain students' motivation to learn English. Courses of ELT should be rationally designed taking into consideration the need of the nation in general and that of the learner in particular. The task of language planners is not only to specify the general aims and objectives of language teaching, but also to keep in view "the requirements of the people in a particular society."²⁰ Since educational psychology considers "motivation is fundamentally dependent on individual's need and drives"²¹, motivation for learning English in Sudan will come only from the felt needs of the Sudanese learner and not from any fancied and imaginative notions about its

importance; past, present or future. Policy makers must give more importance to the learner because “learning objectives”, as J. A. Van Ek says, “must be geared towards learners’ need.”²² In other words, in defining the ELT objectives, we must define the target group of learners whose needs to learn English we aspire to cater to. It is also important to determine what they will need to do with the English language, predict the situation in which they are expected to use it and determine their level of ability to use it. By the analysis of the learner’s need, as Paul Seedhouse states, “a direct link can be drawn from needs to aims to course design, classroom implementation, and evaluation.”²³ In other words, no teaching material can claim to be learner-centered, unless the learner’s subjective needs and perceptions relating to the purpose of learning are taken into account. Any approach to language teaching whether it is a second language, a foreign language or library language must cater, directly, to the needs of the learner and plan its strategies, objectives, methods and procedures according to them.

The changing of the teaching/learning materials, recommending the methods, planning the strategies, laying down aims, objectives and procedures, all, must take into consideration the learners’ needs. The English language in Sudan is a foreign language taught as subject in the school level and it may have an academic purpose in the upper levels of education that turns it into a library language. Reasonable proficiency in the language would also be

necessary for those who proceed to the university where English might help them in referring to various books, references and periodicals published in English. However, even if Arabic becomes the medium of instruction in higher education, a working knowledge of English will be a valuable asset for all students.

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Dr. Abdelrahman Mohammed Yeddi Elnoor is a prominent writer, academician and critic. He was born in Elgolid district; North Sudan on 1st of June 1964. He got his early education in Khalwa; a form of Islamic education, then, he completed the primary and intermediate schools in Elgolid itself. Then, he completed the secondary school in Khartoum. Then, he joined Omdurman Islamic University in 1986. His aim was to study English language and literature, but against his will, he had been admitted in History Dept., therefore, after completing the first year in that Dept., he departed to India to study English language and literature. He completed the Bachelor of Arts; (English as a major paper), in 1990 from Pune University. Then, he completed Master of Arts; (English Literature as a major paper), in 1993 from Pune University. Then, he completed Ph.D. of English; (ELT), from BAMU in Aurangabad in 1997.

Dr. Abdelrahman Mohammed Yeddi Elnoor worked in the field of translation in the Persian Gulf. He has climbed the job grades till he became Translation Expert. Moreover, after his return to Sudan, he worked as Associate Professor in the College of Languages and Translation in Sudan University of Science and Technology till he was dismissed because he wrote and published an article title: “Marketing Academic Degrees in Sudanese Universities: A Testimony for Allah” which exposed the crooked academic ways of the corrupt stakeholders.

After a prolonged and deep reading, studying and researching in the references and books of those who call themselves Sunnis, he shifted from the so-called Sunna Creed, to Shiism; allegiance to the Progeny PBU them; the

true followers of Quran and the Sunna of the Prophet PBUH and his progeny. He has many written works which explain various aspects of this shift and no Mullah could respond, scientifically, to what he has written in this regard.

He is a proficient writer, deep-sighted academician and sarcastic as well as stinging critic. He has written many books and articles. Some of them are in English and some of them are in Arabic. They cover aspects such as education, ELT, literary criticism, history, religion, politics, short stories and other intellectual issues. Many of them are available in the libraries of more than 160 universities all over the world and also in many international national libraries such as Congress Library in the US and Russian National Library. They are also available online on many websites include the author's own website: <https://yeddibooks.com>. The following are lists which include some of his works:

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